Pet Shop of Horrors

10

ペットショップ　オブ　ホラーズ

秋乃茉莉

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Pet Shop of Horrors

Volume 10
by Matsuri Akino

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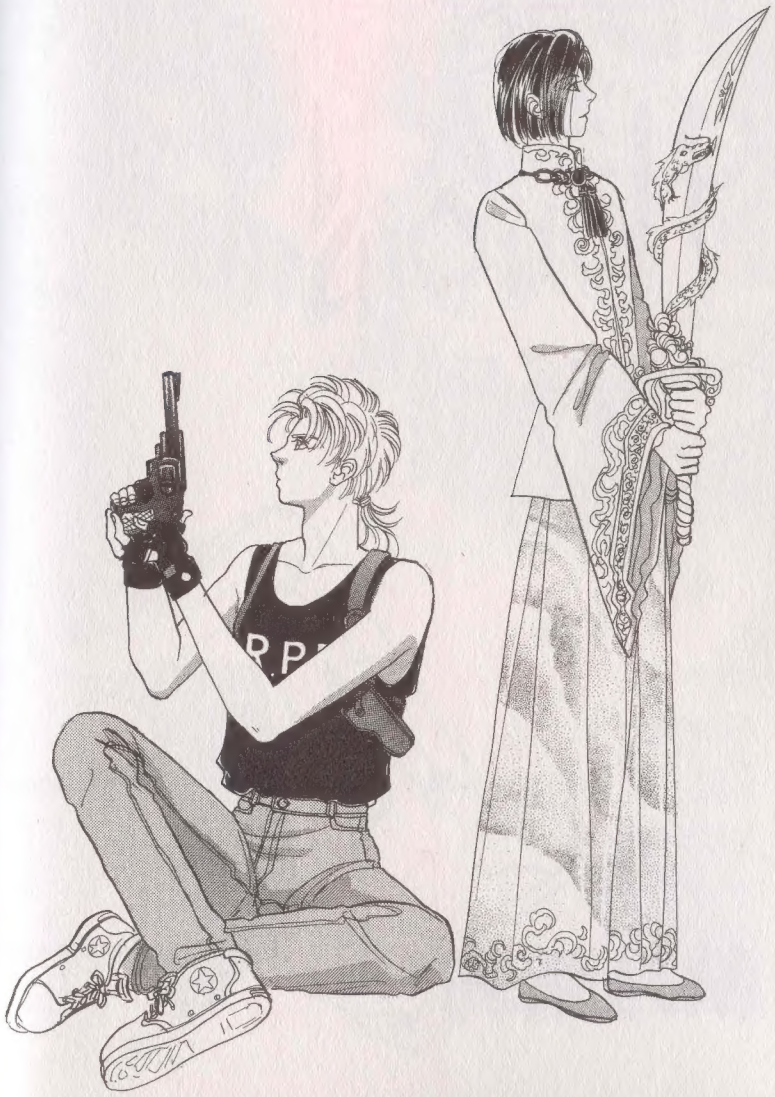


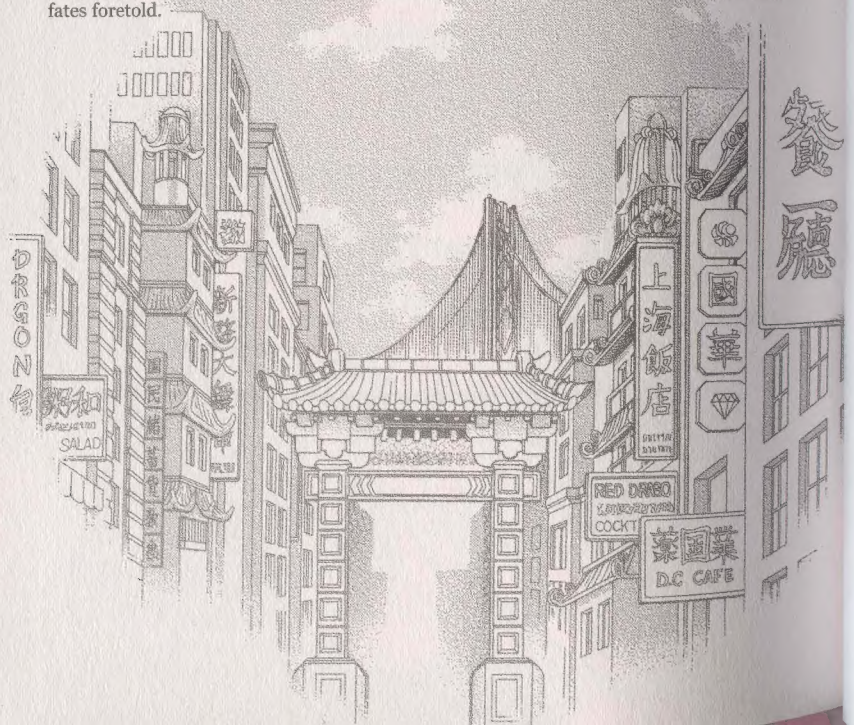
The Story so far

Plumes of mist billow up from the back alleys of Chinatown, home to a variety of merchants of the occult and mystical. And in the crevices of this urban barrio sits a solitary pet shop. Its proprietor, an enigmatic figure known as Count D, beckons through his doors the injured and the scarred, introducing them to creatures wondrous and bizarre.

Our guide through this mysterious landscape is one Detective Leon Orcot, who has traced a series of seemingly unrelated crimes to Count D and his Pet Shop of Horrors. A steadfast skeptic, Leon dismisses as trickery the inexplicable events he witnesses. But in his continual attempts to prove D's guilt, this hard-boiled dick inevitably finds himself enraptured by the illusions around him.

The detective, therefore, has formed a strange friendship with his suspect. And as the bond between the two thickens, one must question who has the upper hand. Is the Count playing into the detective's hands, or is it the other way around? Now the veils of secrecy are slowly being withdrawn...the hidden truths of the detective and the dark secrets of the Count are soon to be revealed.

Prepare yourselves now for four tales of wonder and woe in which lessons are learned and fates foretold.



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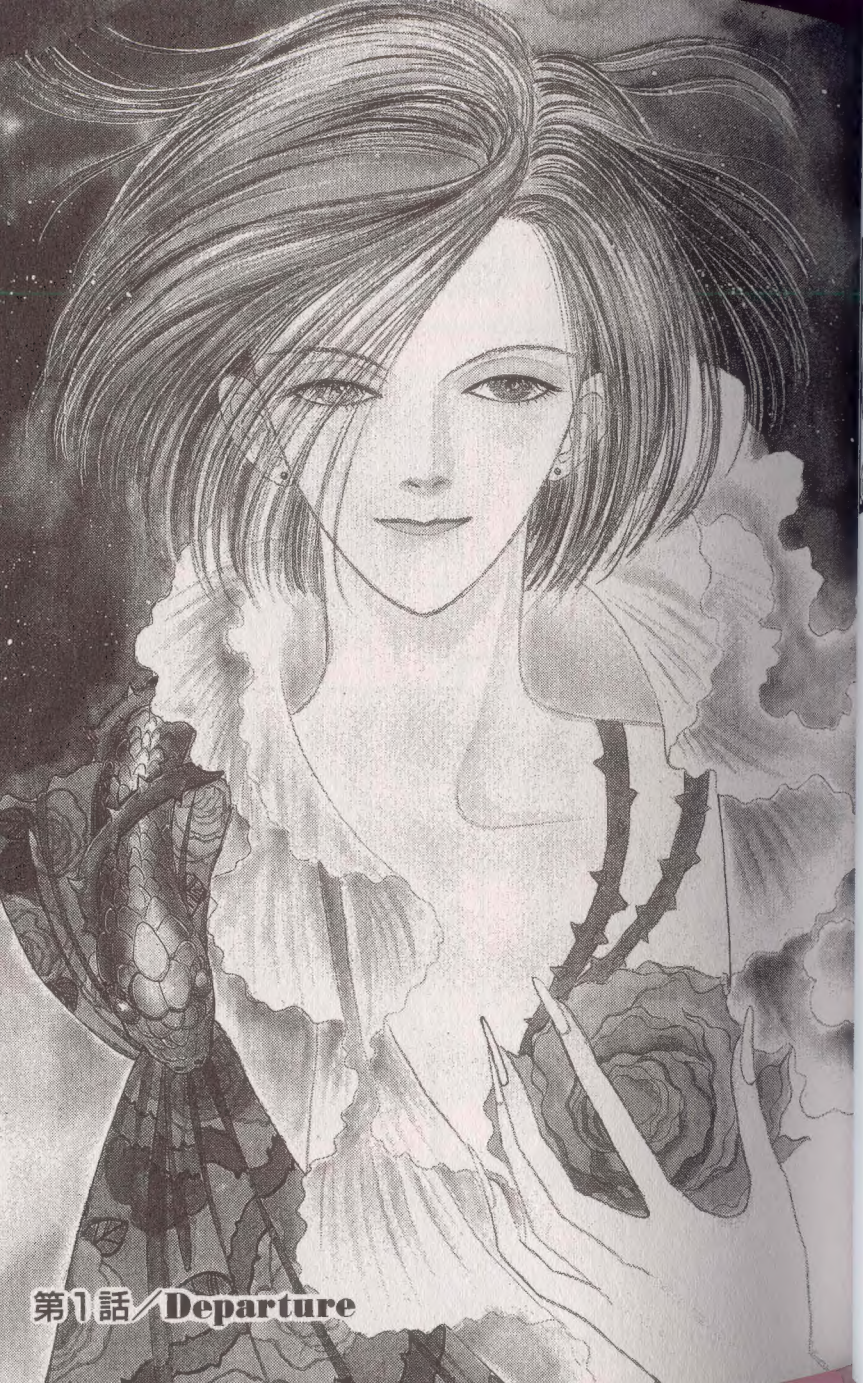


第1話／Departure

CONTENTS

1 Departure.....7

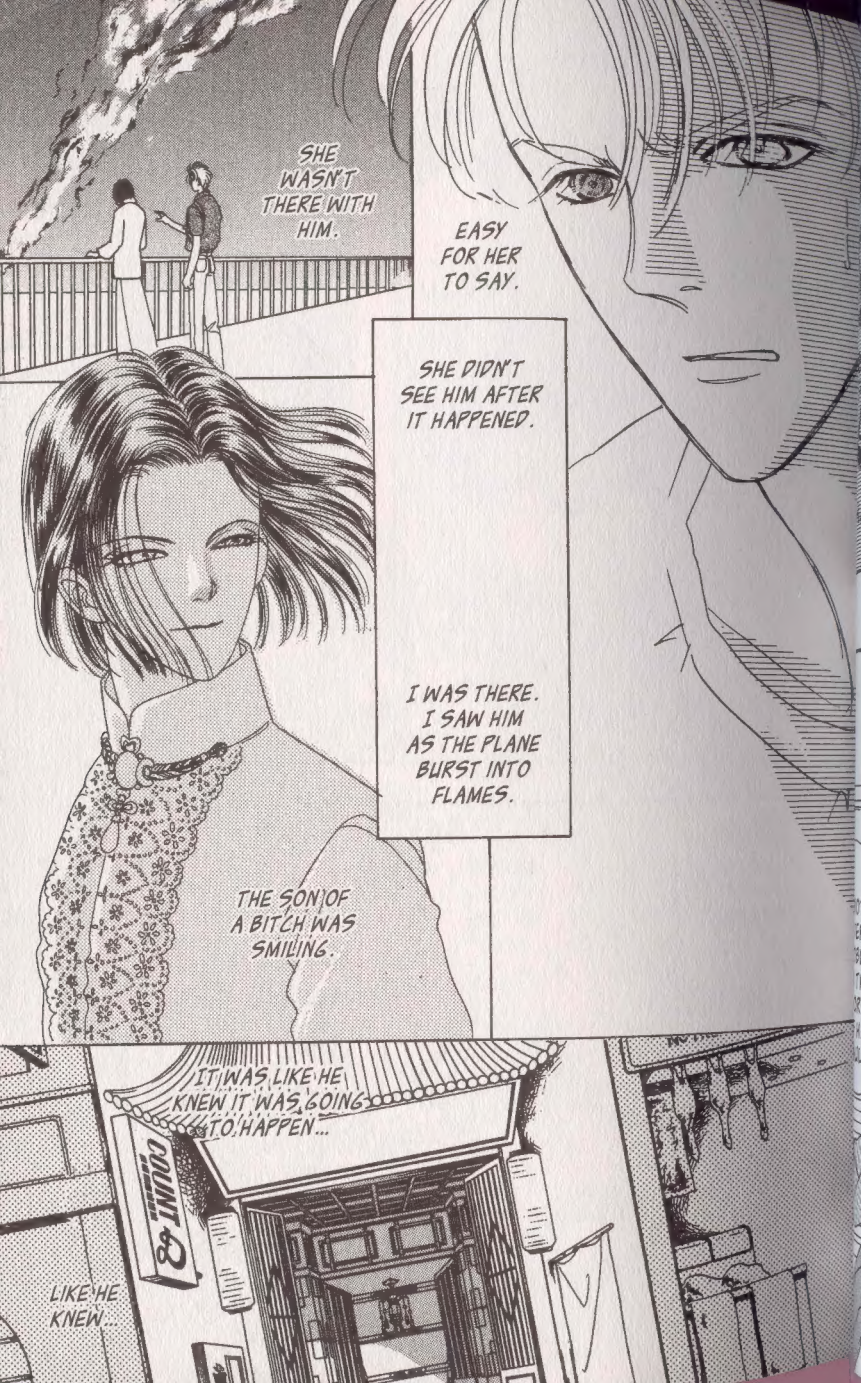
2 Disappearance.....53

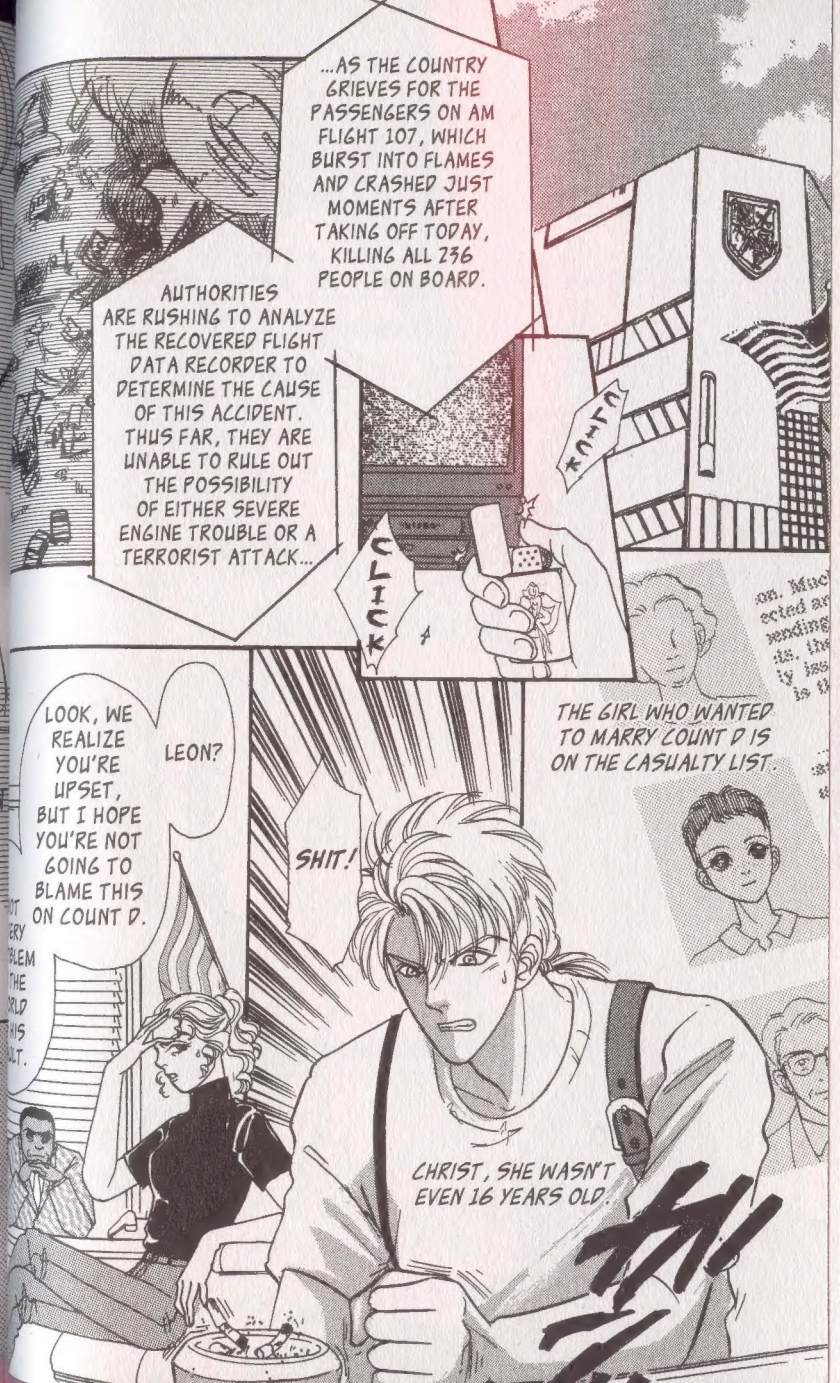
3 Duplication.....103

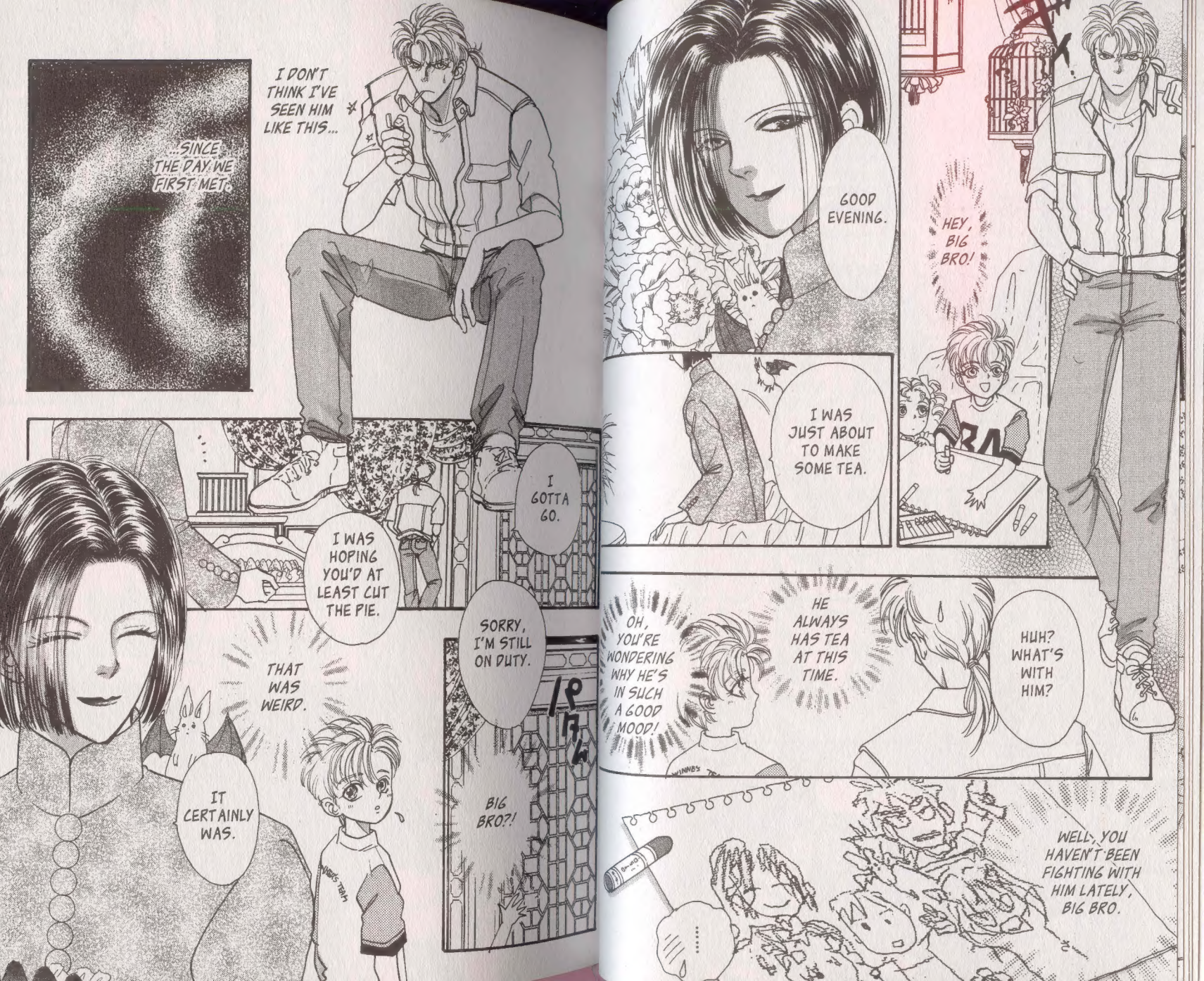
4 D.....155

PET CATALOG.....205

Count D's Cosplay Lesson 207


SHE WASN'T THERE WITH HIM.
EASY FOR HER TO SAY.
SHE DIDN'T SEE HIM AFTER IT HAPPENED.
I WAS THERE. I SAW HIM AS THE PLANE BURST INTO FLAMES.
THE SON OF A BITCH WAS SMILING.
IT WAS LIKE HE KNEW IT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN...
LIKE HE KNEW...


...AS THE COUNTRY GRIEVES FOR THE PASSENGERS ON AM FLIGHT 107, WHICH BURST INTO FLAMES AND CRASHED JUST MOMENTS AFTER TAKING OFF TODAY, KILLING ALL 236 PEOPLE ON BOARD.
AUTHORITIES ARE RUSHING TO ANALYZE THE RECOVERED FLIGHT DATA RECORDER TO DETERMINE THE CAUSE OF THIS ACCIDENT. THUS FAR, THEY ARE UNABLE TO RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF EITHER SEVERE ENGINE TROUBLE OR A TERRORIST ATTACK...
CLICK
LEON?
LOOK, WE REALIZE YOU'RE UPSET, BUT I HOPE YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BLAME THIS ON COUNT D.
SHIT!
THE GIRL WHO WANTED TO MARRY COUNT D IS ON THE CASUALTY LIST.
CHRIST, SHE WASN'T EVEN 16 YEARS OLD.


...SINCE THE DAY WE FIRST MET.
I DON'T THINK I'VE SEEN HIM LIKE THIS...
GOOD EVENING.
I WAS JUST ABOUT TO MAKE SOME TEA.
HEY, BIG BRO!
HUH? WHAT'S WITH HIM?
HE ALWAYS HAS TEA AT THIS TIME.
OH, YOU'RE WONDERING WHY HE'S IN SUCH A GOOD MOOD!
WELL, YOU HAVEN'T BEEN FIGHTING WITH HIM LATELY, BIG BRO.
I GOTTA GO.
I WAS HOPING YOU'D AT LEAST CUT THE PIE.
SORRY, I'M STILL ON DUTY.
BIG BRO?!
THAT WAS WEIRD.
IT CERTAINLY WAS.

CHRIS!!
HUH?
DID BIG BRO FORGET SOMETHING?
CHRIS! HOW'VE YOU BEEN, BIG GUY?
UH...
CHRIS?
YOU WOULD BE CHRIS'S SISTERS, CORRECT?
JOSIE AND... SAMANTHA?
YES.
AH... WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TEA?

GO ON.
AND THEN...
WE SAW YOU TWO ON THE NEWS. THERE WAS THAT INCIDENT WITH THE TIGER...
That again...
I...
I WANTED ...
...TO SEE CHRIS...
...SO I COULD APOLOGIZE TO HIM.
PROPERLY.
CHRIS!!
HEY, CHRIS, WAIT UP!
Hmph!
HE LOOKED AT ME LIKE I WAS SOME SORT OF MONSTER.
HE REALLY DOES HATE ME...
SO, CHRIS STILL ISN'T SPEAKING?
NO, HE ISN'T.
I THOUGHT YOU LIVED ON THE EAST COAST.
SO, WHAT BRINGS YOU OUT HERE?

SHE WON'T WAKE UP NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE CALL HER.
SHUKO'S ASLEEP.
HUH?
OUT OF THE THREE GIRLS THAT SHARE HONLON'S BODY, KANAN, JUNREI AND SHUKO...
...SHUKO'S ALWAYS BEEN THE MOST LEVEL-HEADED ONE.
KANAN, WATCH WHAT YOU SAY!
Don't think I can't hear you!
IS SHE SICK?
MAYBE I SHOULD TELL THE COUNT ABOUT THIS.
FORGET ABOUT SHUKO! I WAS GETTING TIRED OF HER NAGGING ANYWAY!
UH...
WELL...
I GUESS I COULD GIVE IT A SHOT.
HEY, CHRIS... YOU CALL HER.
MAYBE SHE'LL ANSWER TO YOUR VOICE.
MY VOICE?

STOP CRYING!! YOU'RE A YOUNG MAN! START ACTING LIKE IT!
YOU'RE SNIVELING LIKE A LITTLE BABY BECAUSE YOU SAW YOUR SISTERS?!
THAT'S IT?!
I...
BUT...
YOU'RE EVEN MAKING MY EARS HURT.
KANAN... DON'T Y-YELL AT HIM LIKE THAT... PLEASE.
QUIT PULLING MY HAIR!
OWW!
OH, SHOVE IT!
STAY OUT OF IT, JUNREI!
.....
.....
WHERE'S SHUKO?
HUH?

THERE ARE A LOT OF DOORS IN MY SHOP...
...BUT CHRIS IS CERTAINLY BEHIND ONE OF THEM.
RIGHT! GOT IT.
...THE STORE IS OPEN TO YOU.
YOU'RE FREE TO LOOK AROUND FOR CHRIS. HE'S HERE SOMEWHERE.
THANKS.
UH... WAIT, I'LL...
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.
YES...
SO, JOSIE... WOULD YOU LIKE SOME MORE TEA?
THIS MATTER IS BETWEEN CHRIS AND SAMANTHA.
LET HER HANDLE IT.

SHUKO ...?
SHUKO?
SHUKO!
WELL, IN THAT CASE...

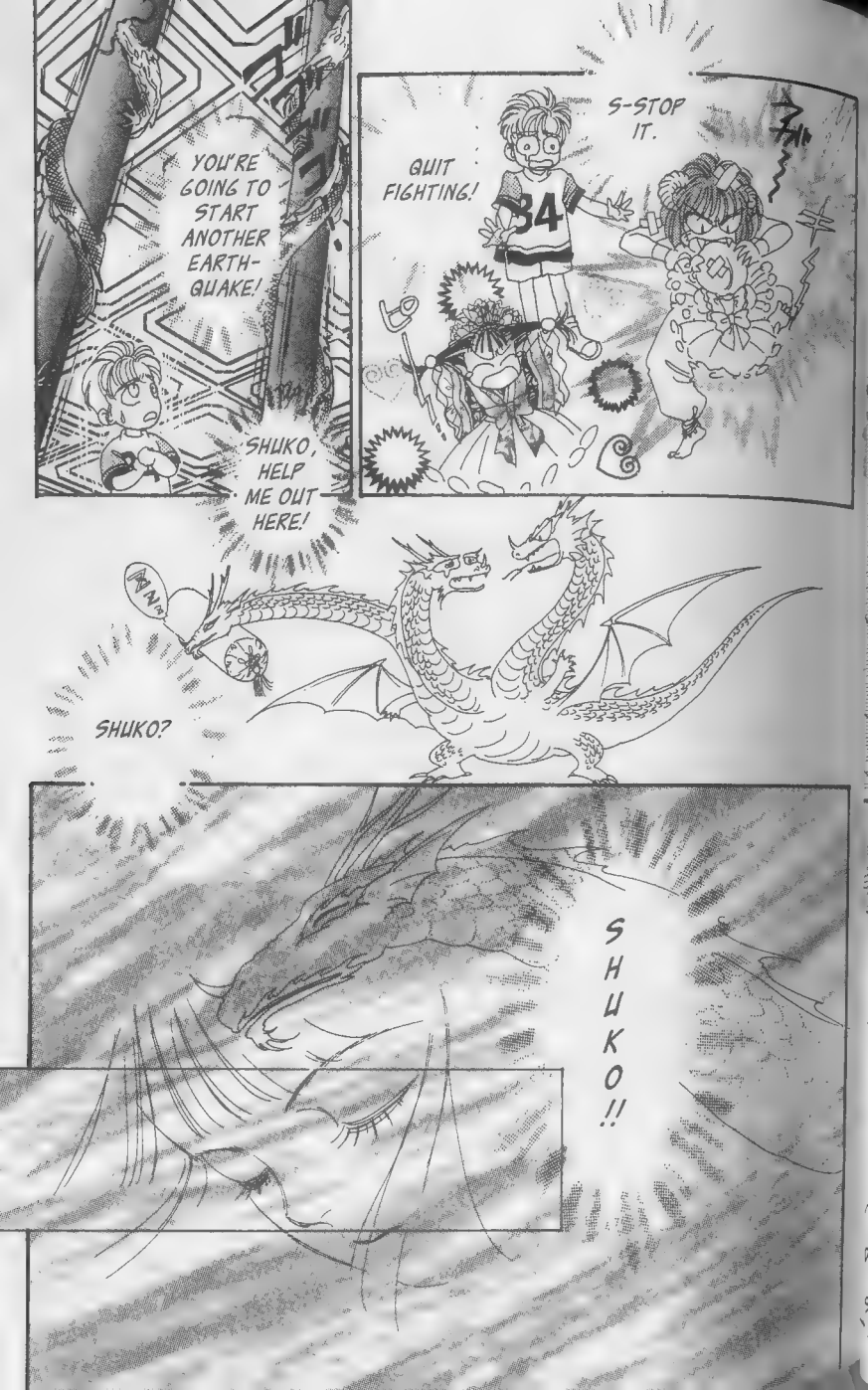
YOUR MOTHER DIED BECAUSE OF YOU! YOU KILLED YOUR MOTHER!
YOU'RE NOT MY REAL BROTHER! YOU'RE ADOPTED!
IT WASN'T A PROBLEM UNTIL THE DAY THEY GOT INTO THEIR FIRST REALLY BIG ARGUMENT...
WE HAD HOPED TO KEEP ALL THE DETAILS ABOUT CHRIS'S BIRTH FROM SAM UNTIL SHE WAS OLDER...
...BUT IT PROVED TOO DIFFICULT, AND SAM EVENTUALLY FOUND OUT.
Hmm
CHRIS WAS NEVER THE SAME AFTER THAT.
WITH ONE ANGRY OUTBURST FROM A CONFUSED AND HURT LITTLE GIRL, OUR HAPPY FAMILY WAS SHATTERED.
THE SHOCK OF THE DISCOVERY WAS SO GREAT THAT CHRIS LOST HIS VOICE...
...AND SAMANTHA HAS FELT GUILTY EVER SINCE.
huff
WHY COULDN'T MOM AND DAD ADOPT A BABY GIRL?
OH, YEAH...
NO ONE EVEN SUSPECTS THAT HE'S NOT REALLY MY BROTHER.
I KNOW YOU AND CHRIS ARE COUSINS AND NOT REALLY SIBLINGS...
...BUT YOU LOOK SO MUCH ALIKE.
SHE WAS USED TO BEING THE BABY OF THE FAMILY, AND SHE HAD A HARD TIME ACCEPTING CHRIS.
...SAM WAS FOUR YEARS OLD.
WHEN HE CAME TO LIVE WITH US...
AS YOU KNOW, CHRIS'S REAL MOTHER DIED DURING CHILDBIRTH SEVEN YEARS AGO.
...BUT IT DIDN'T MAKE IT ANY EASIER FOR HER...OR FOR CHRIS.
WE EVEN TRIED TELLING HER THAT THE BABY WAS A GIFT FROM SANTA CLAUS...

THAT'S SAM!
SO IT WOULD SEEM.
CHRIS!!
LOOK!
OH, MAN! SHE'S HEADING RIGHT TOWARD US!
SHE LOOKS AWFULLY SPOOKED. T-CHAN, DID YOU SAY ANYTHING TO HER?!
COOL! IT'S LIKE A ROUND TV!
I WANNA CHANGE THE CHANNEL.

A GIRL HUMAN!
IT'S A HUMAN!
UH... UM...
DO ANY OF YOU KNOW CHRIS?
WANNA PLAY?!
Huh?
CHRIS?
CHRIS?
HE WENT THAT WAY!
FORGET CHRIS! COME PLAY WITH US!
CHRIS? I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM TODAY.
I SAW HIM PLAYING WITH THE TIGERS! I THINK...
huff
WHAT THE HECK SORT OF PET SHOP IS THIS?!
IT'S FULL OF WEIRD PEOPLE!
OH, CHRIS, WHERE ARE YOU?!
THE BOY?
THAT WAY.

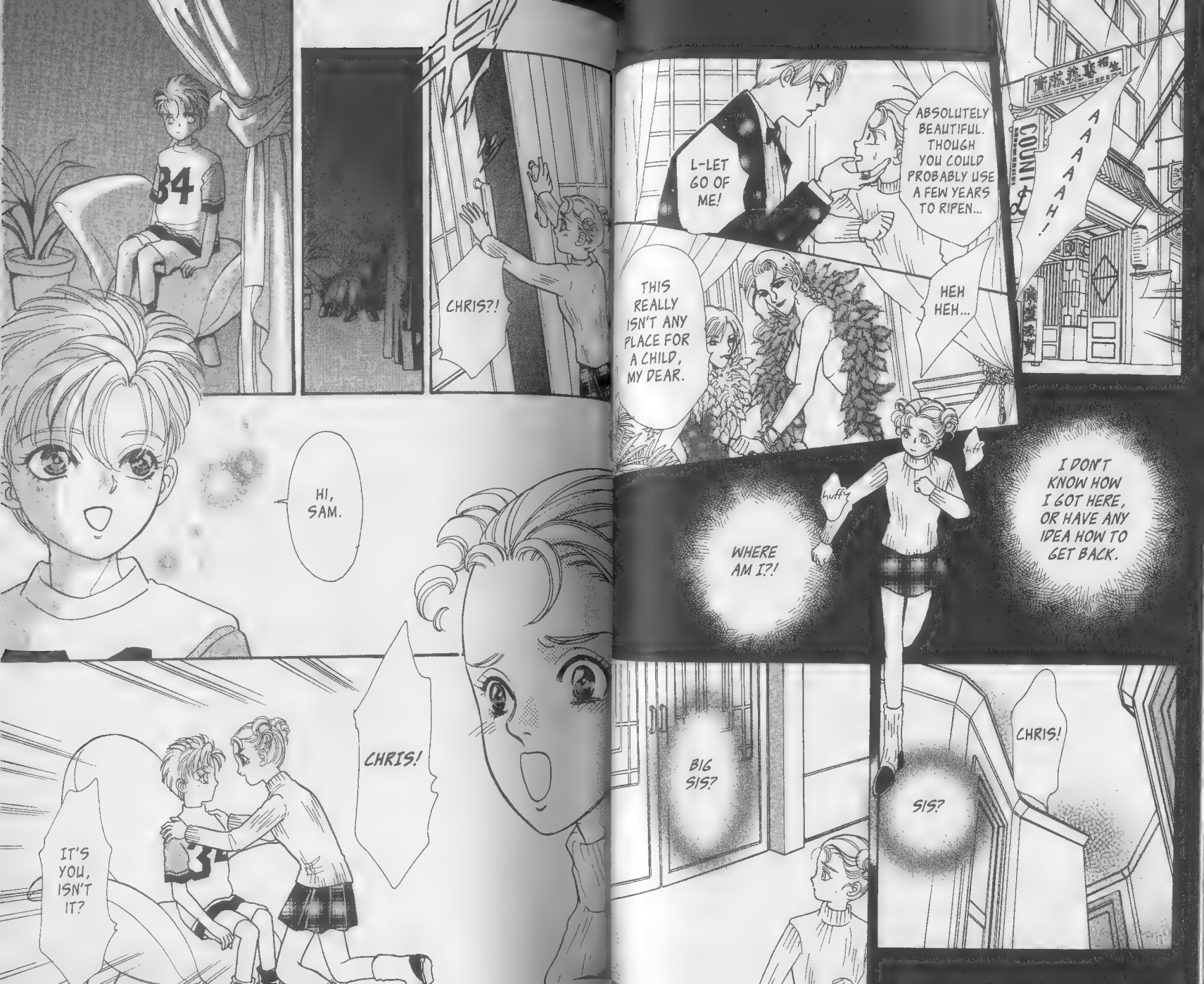
I'M NOT REALLY HER BROTHER...
...AND MY MOTHER REALLY IS DEAD.
IT'S NOT SAM'S FAULT.
OKAY, OKAY! STOP IT! ALL OF YOU!
SHE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING THAT WASN'T TRUE.
CHRIS, YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF FOR THAT! IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT!
EVERYONE PRETENDED THAT MY AUNT WAS MY MOTHER.
EVEN LEON NEVER SAID ANYTHING.
SAM WAS THE ONLY PERSON WILLING TO TELL THE TRUTH.
IF NOT FOR SAM, I PROBABLY NEVER WOULD HAVE KNOWN ABOUT MY REAL MOTHER.

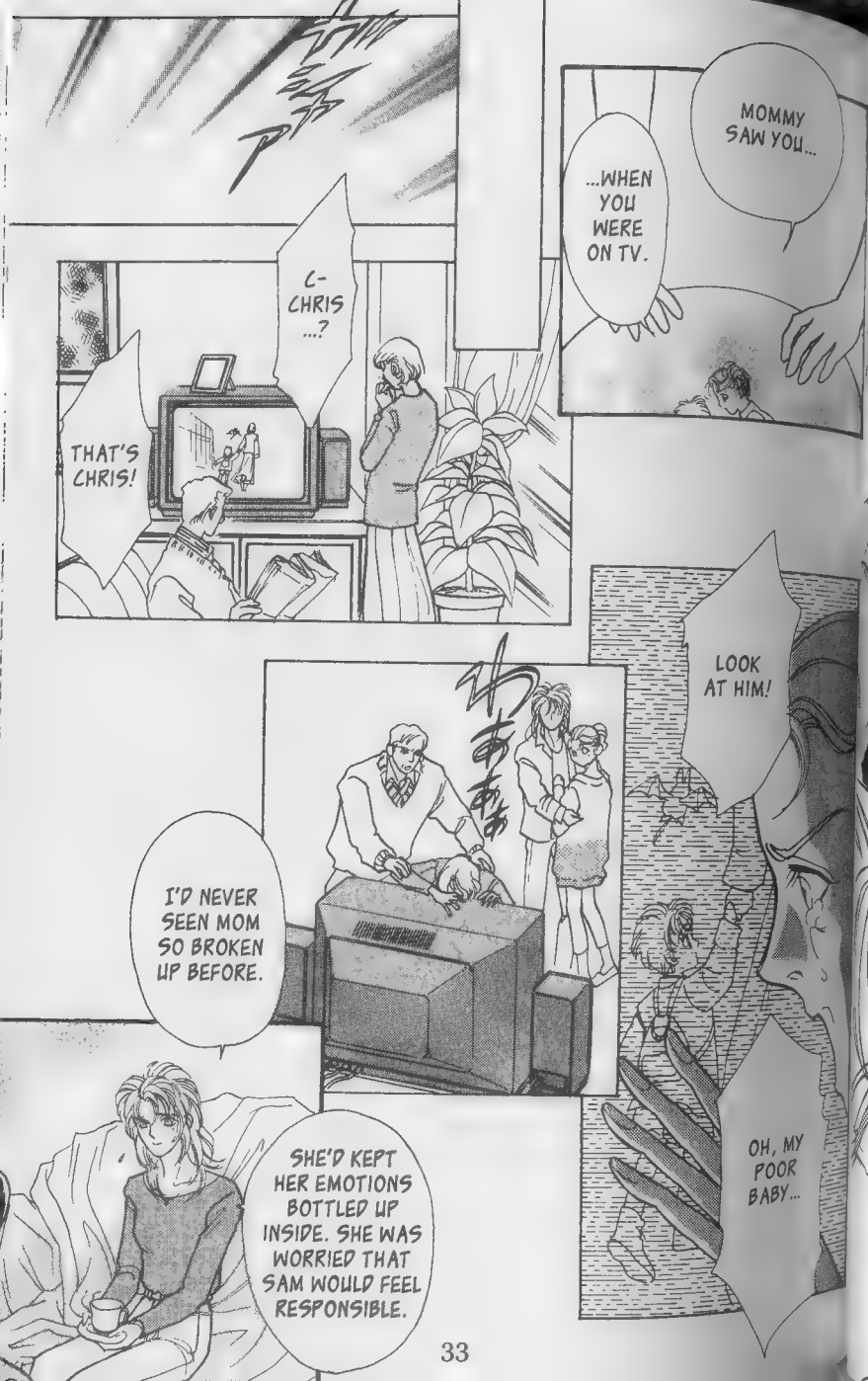
I AGREE.
THIS ALL STARTED WHEN CHRIS BROKE HER DOLL, AFTER ALL.
HEY, DON'T BLAME ME FOR THIS! I HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING TO HER. SHE'S HERE FOR CHRIS, AND I THINK CHRIS SHOULD HEAR WHAT SHE HAS TO SAY.
I'D SAY YOU OWE HER AN APOLOGY!
UM...
THEY SOUND JUST LIKE BIG BRO...
THAT'S NOT THE POINT!
DARN IT, JUNREI, STOP WITH THE HAIR!!
THAT'S RIGHT! SHE WAS DOWNRIGHT CRUEL TO CHRIS!
BUT...SHE'S OLDER THAN HE IS. SHE SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER. IT WAS JUST A DOLL.
Tug
Tug


YOU'RE GOING TO START ANOTHER EARTH-QUAKE!
SHUKO, HELP ME OUT HERE!
QUIT FIGHTING!
S-STOP IT.
SHUKO?
SHUKO!!

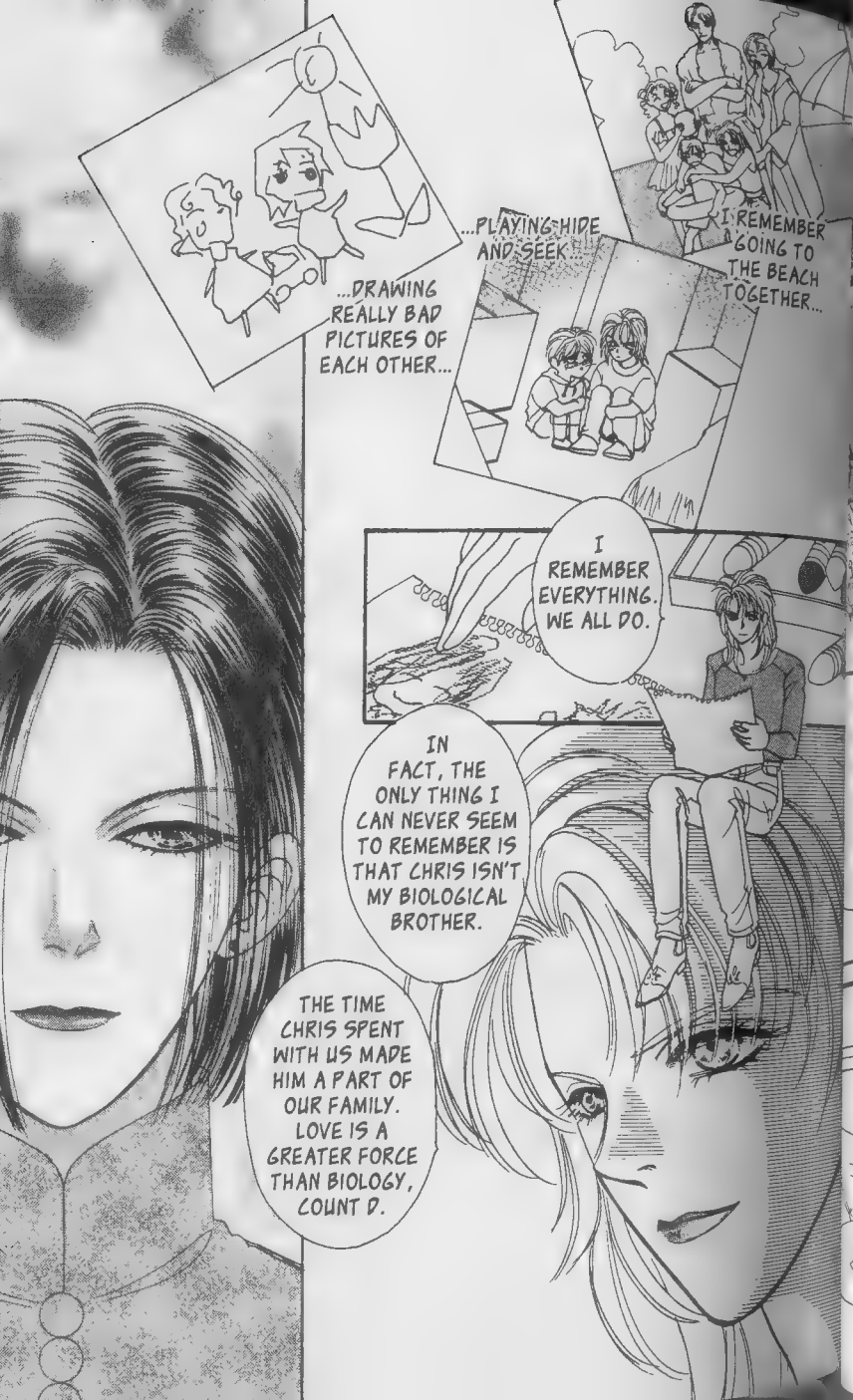
TYPICAL CHILD...
...THINKING ONLY OF HIMSELF! YOU THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON HURTING, CHRIS?!
WHAT ABOUT SAM?!
COUNT D'S BEEN GOING TOO SOFT ON YOU!
YEAH, YOU'VE GOT IT PRETTY SWEET. MOST GUYS LIKE YOU WOULD BE PUT IN A HOSPITAL.
BUT YOU GET TO HANG OUT HERE WITH PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, IF NOT SAYING.
YOU'RE BOTH AWFUL. H-HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?
THAT'S RIGHT! CHRIS IS JUST A LITTLE KID!
HE HAS TO GROW UP SOME-TIME!
YOU GIRLS STAY OUT OF IT.
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY...?!

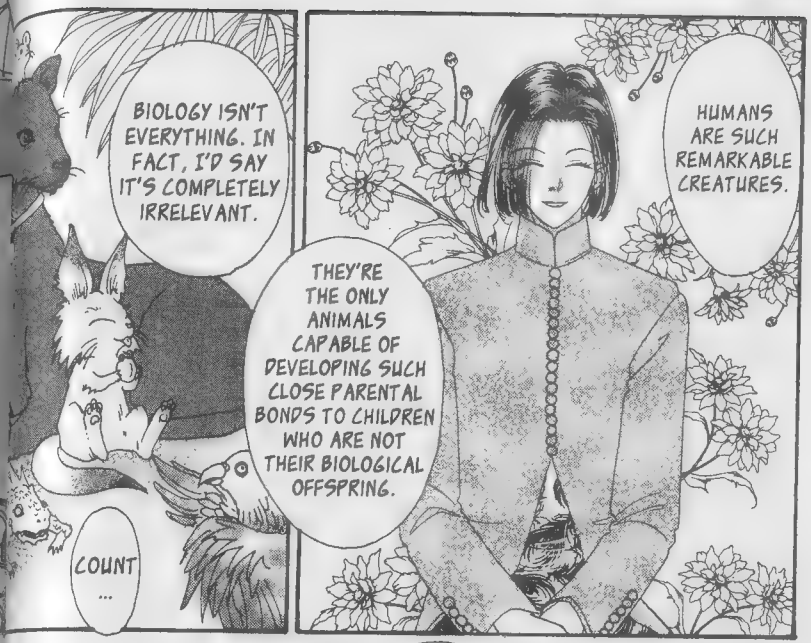
NO.
THIS CONCERNS ANOTHER MATTER.
WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT COUNT D?
HOW'S THE COUNT DOING?
WHY DO YOU ASSUME I WAS AT THE PET SHOP?
WEL-COME BACK.
Yeah.
AAH!
ANYHOW, THE CHIEF WANTS TO SEE YOU.
...A HUNCH.
THAT'S ALL.
Sorry if I was mistaken.
CALL IT...
EY!
WHAT-EVER.
FBI, EH?
AH, LEON...
THIS IS AGENT HOWELL FROM THE FBI.
LET ME GUESS, THE PLANE CRASH HAS BEEN RULED AN ACT OF TERRORISM, AND YOU NEED OUR COOPERATION IN CATCHING THE BAD GUYS.


CHRIS?!
HI, SAM.
CHRIS!
IT'S YOU, ISN'T IT?
L-LET GO OF ME!
ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL. THOUGH YOU COULD PROBABLY USE A FEW YEARS TO RIPEN...
AAAAH!
THIS REALLY ISN'T ANY PLACE FOR A CHILD, MY DEAR.
HEH HEH...
WHERE AM I?!
I DON'T KNOW HOW I GOT HERE, OR HAVE ANY IDEA HOW TO GET BACK.
BIG SIS?
SIS?
CHRIS!

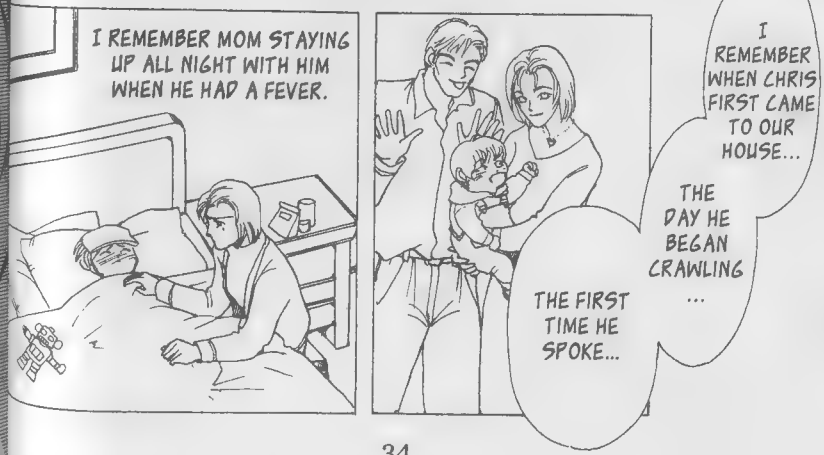

C-CHRIS ...?
THAT'S CHRIS!
...WHEN YOU WERE ON TV.
MOMMY SAW YOU...
LOOK AT HIM!
OH, MY POOR BABY...
I'D NEVER SEEN MOM SO BROKEN UP BEFORE.
SHE'D KEPT HER EMOTIONS BOTTLED UP INSIDE. SHE WAS WORRIED THAT SAM WOULD FEEL RESPONSIBLE.

YEAH, ME TOO.
I'M SORRY FOR BREAKING YOUR BUNNY.
I'M SORRY FOR SAYING WHAT I DID TO YOU.
OH, CHRIS, I'M SORRY.
I'M OVER HERE, SAM!
HEY, THAT'S NOT ME! WHO'S SHE TALKING TO?!
...COME BACK HOME?
HUH?
IF YOU FORGIVE ME, THEN WILL YOU PLEASE...
HUH?
THAT'S PROBABLY TEN-CHAN.
I REALLY MISS MY LITTLE BROTHER. I MISS YOU, CHRIS.


...DRAWING REALLY BAD PICTURES OF EACH OTHER...
...PLAYING HIDE AND SEEK...
I REMEMBER GOING TO THE BEACH TOGETHER...
I REMEMBER EVERYTHING. WE ALL DO.
IN FACT, THE ONLY THING I CAN NEVER SEEM TO REMEMBER IS THAT CHRIS ISN'T MY BIOLOGICAL BROTHER.
THE TIME CHRIS SPENT WITH US MADE HIM A PART OF OUR FAMILY. LOVE IS A GREATER FORCE THAN BIOLOGY, COUNT D.

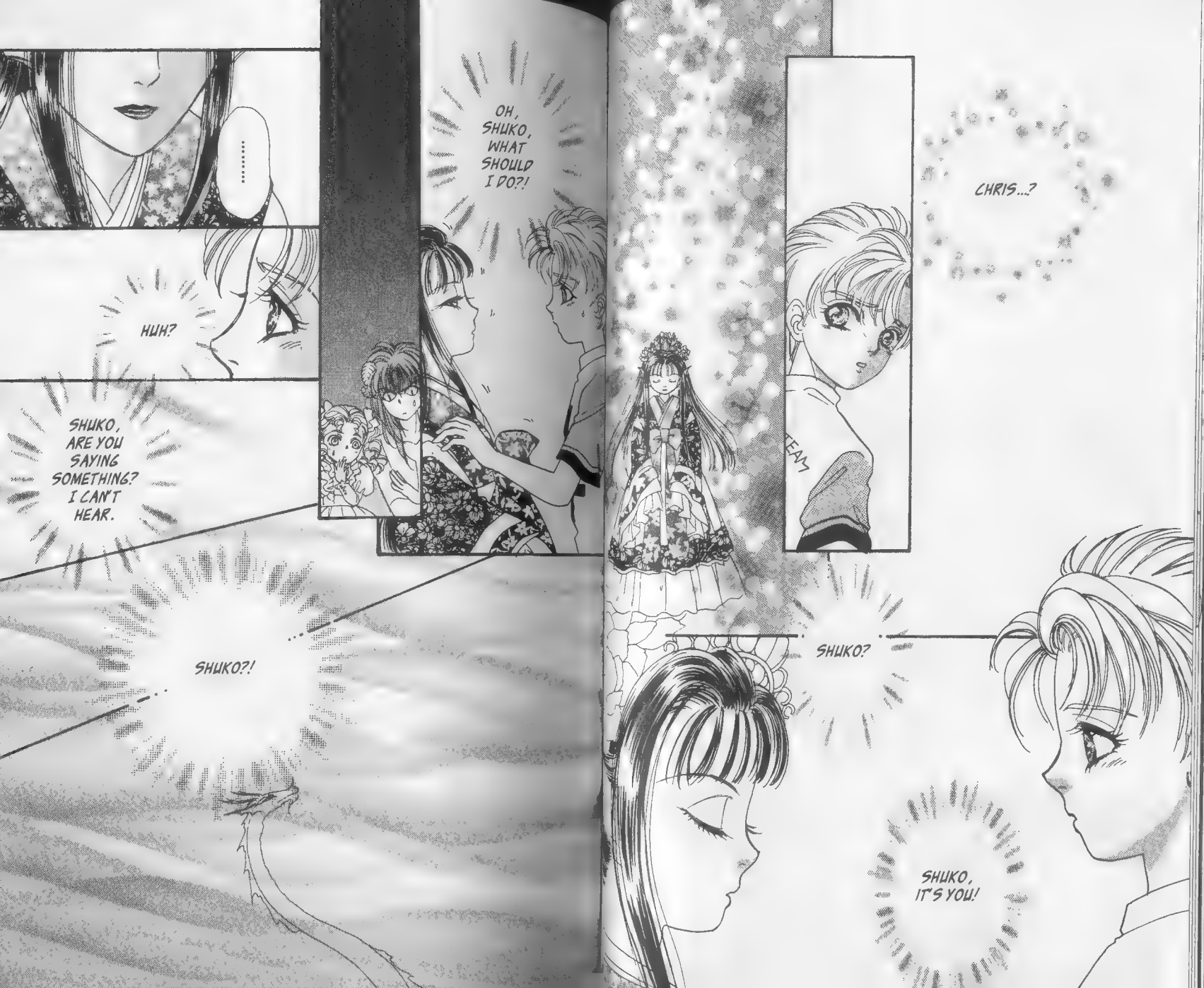

BIOLOGY ISN'T EVERYTHING. IN FACT, I'D SAY IT'S COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT.
COUNT ...
THEY'RE THE ONLY ANIMALS CAPABLE OF DEVELOPING SUCH CLOSE PARENTAL BONDS TO CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT THEIR BIOLOGICAL OFFSPRING.
HUMANS ARE SUCH REMARKABLE CREATURES.

...I CAN REMEMBER IT ALL LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY.

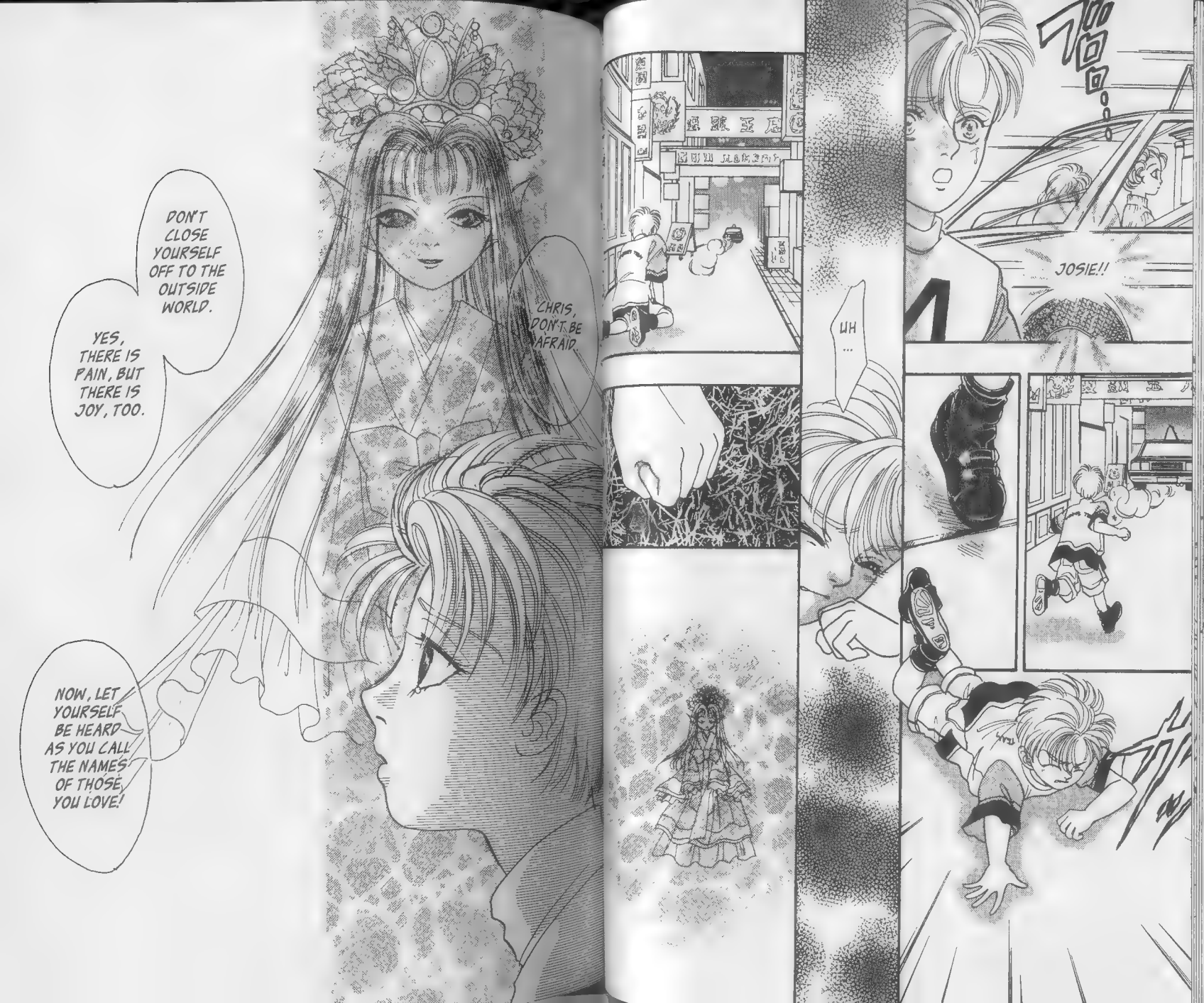

I REMEMBER MOM STAYING UP ALL NIGHT WITH HIM WHEN HE HAD A FEVER.
THE FIRST TIME HE SPOKE...
THE DAY HE BEGAN CRAWLING ...
I REMEMBER WHEN CHRIS FIRST CAME TO OUR HOUSE...

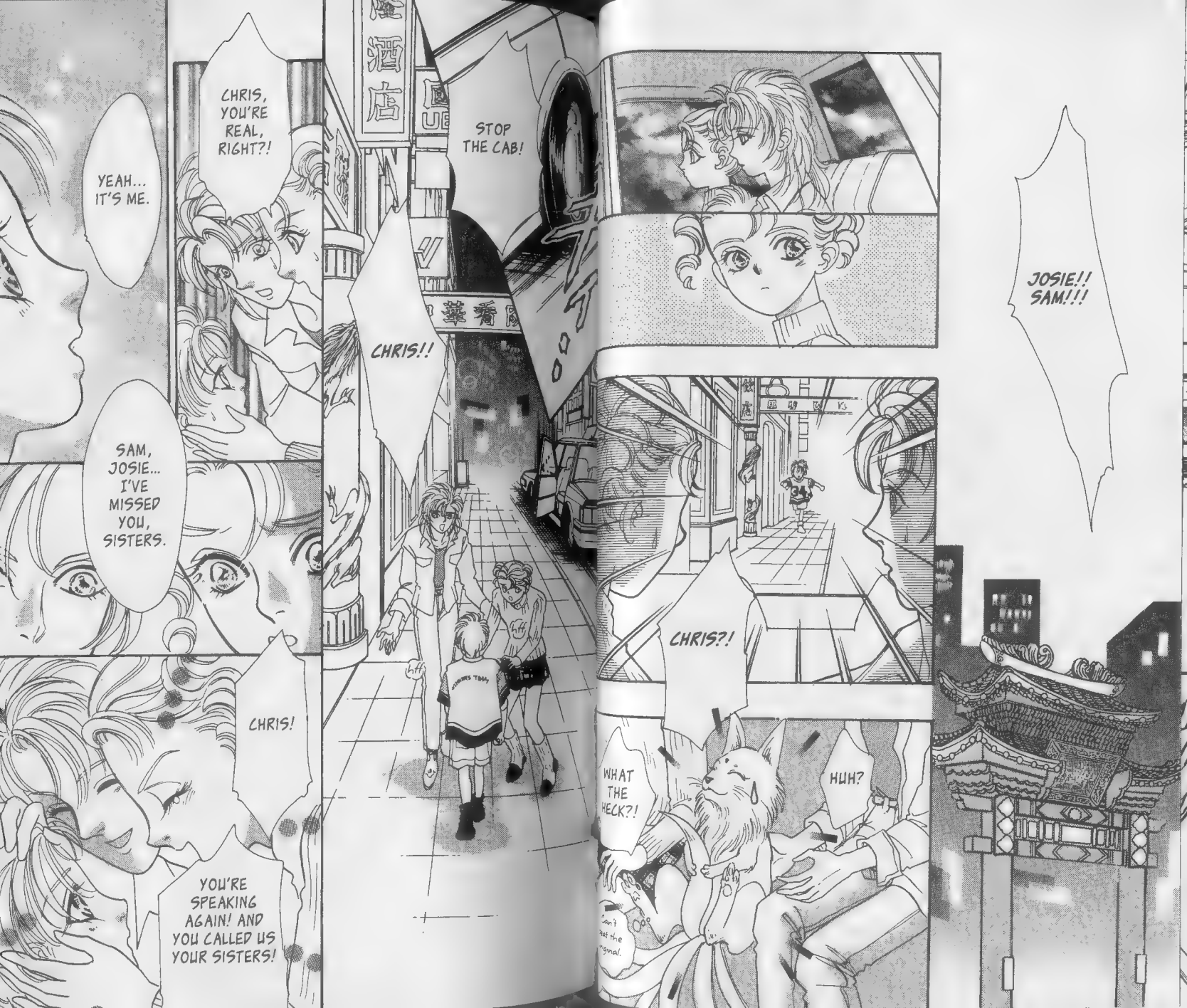
TEN-CHAN'S GREAT AT MIMICRY. IT'S HIS GIFT.
BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, HE'LL BE BETTER AT BEING YOU THAN YOU ARE!
YOU LUCKED OUT!
SAM?!
WELL, ALL RIGHT, KID!
THAT'S GREAT, CHRIS!
NOW YOU CAN STAY HERE FOREVER.
CHRIS ...
...WITH TEN-CHAN IN YOUR PLACE, NO ONE WILL EVER COME HERE TO TAKE YOU BACK AGAIN.
OH GOD...
I...

MOMMY ...?
CHRIS, WE'RE WORRIED ABOUT HER.
SHE HASN'T BEEN EATING.
SHE WAS ALWAYS SO NICE TO ME.
MAMA ALWAYS WIPED MY FACE WHEN I CRIED.
PLEASE, CHRIS...
PLEASE, COME HOME TO MOMMY AGAIN!
SURE!
I'LL GO WITH YOU, BIG SIS!
TEN-CHAN?!
OH... CHRIS!!
MOMMY WILL BE SO HAPPY! EVERYTHING WILL BE JUST LIKE IT WAS BEFORE, YOU'LL SEE!


.....
HUH?
SHUKO, ARE YOU SAYING SOMETHING? I CAN'T HEAR.
SHUKO?!
OH, SHUKO, WHAT SHOULD I DO?!
CHRIS...?
SHUKO?
SHUKO, IT'S YOU!

COUNT ?!
CHRIS, WAIT! DON'T GO!!
huff
huff
34
OH, HELLO, CHRIS.
HERE... HERE RE MY STERS?
COUNT!
パパ
パパ
huff
24
TO THE AIR-PORT.
SAM!! JOSIE!!
COUNT
CHRIS ?!
huff
huff
THEY JUST LEFT.
THEY HAD TEN-CHAN WITH THEM, BUT THEY KEPT CALLING HIM "CHRIS."

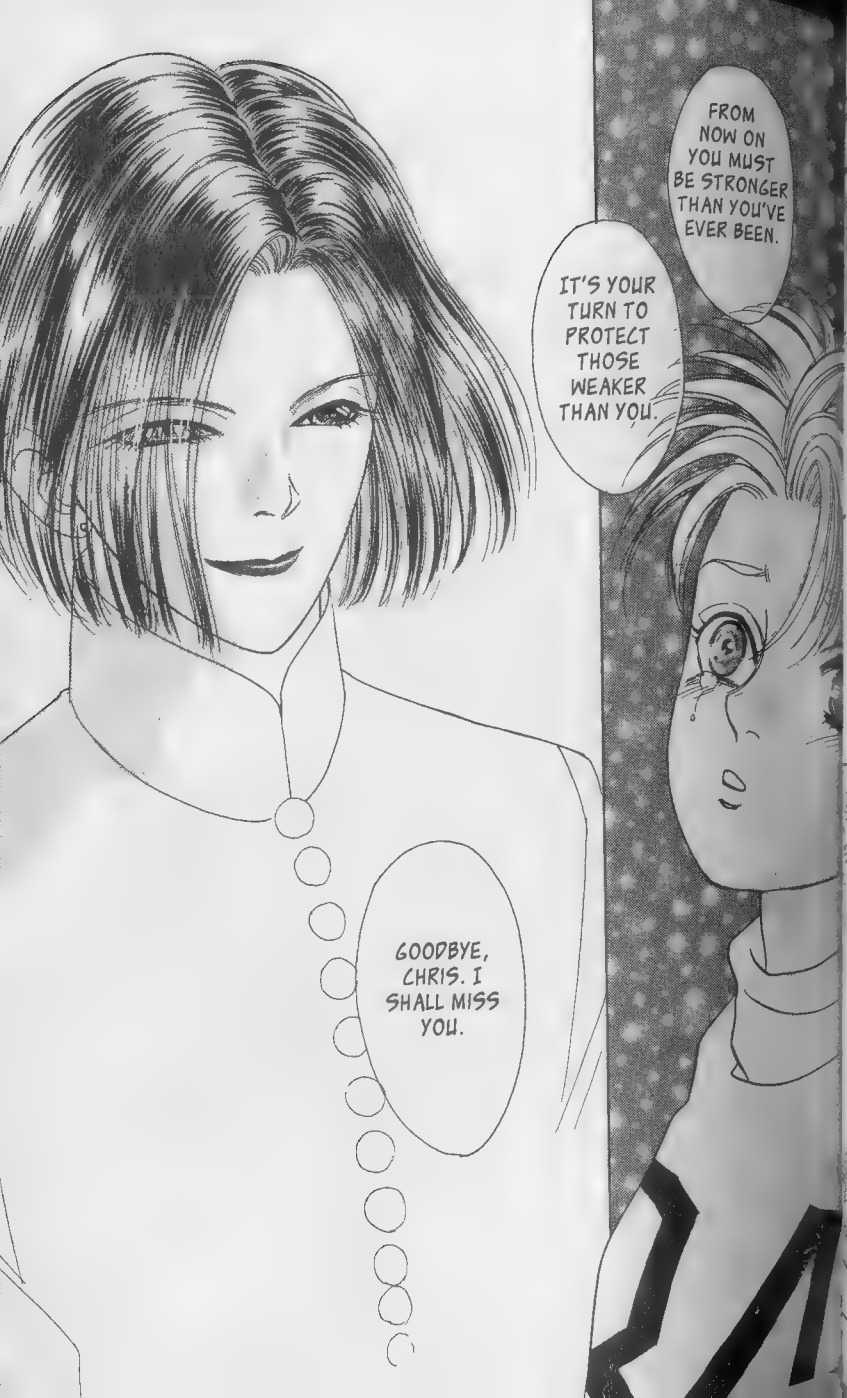

DON'T CLOSE YOURSELF OFF TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
YES, THERE IS PAIN, BUT THERE IS JOY, TOO.
NOW, LET YOURSELF BE HEARD AS YOU CALL THE NAMES OF THOSE YOU LOVE!
CHRIS, DON'T BE AFRAID.
JOSIE!!
UH ...


CHRIS, YOU'RE REAL, RIGHT?!
YEAH... IT'S ME.
SAM, JOSIE... I'VE MISSED YOU, SISTERS.
CHRIS!
YOU'RE SPEAKING AGAIN! AND YOU CALLED US YOUR SISTERS!
STOP THE CAB!
CHRIS!!
JOSIE!! SAM!!!
CHRIS?!
WHAT THE HECK?!
HUH?

COUNT D, LISTEN! I CAN TALK!!
CHRIS ...
COUNT !!
COUNT D
34
YEAH!
YOUR OLDER BROTHER WILL BE SO HAPPY.
HOW WONDERFUL.

MY VOICE IS BACK!
I'M SPEAKING ...?
I...

YOU PASSED BY T-CHAN ON YOUR WAY IN.
AHAHAH...
OH, MAN! I CAN'T WAIT TO TELL PON-CHAN AND T-CHAN!
HUH?
WAIT A...
WHERE IS EVERYONE?
COUNT?
PON-CHAN'S RIGHT HERE, CHRIS.
WHEN DID ALL THESE ANIMALS GET HERE?
WHY ARE...
EVERYONE HAS...
...BEEN HERE ALL ALONG.


GOODBYE, CHRIS. I SHALL MISS YOU.
IT'S YOUR TURN TO PROTECT THOSE WEAKER THAN YOU.
FROM NOW ON YOU MUST BE STRONGER THAN YOU'VE EVER BEEN.

I BELIEVE YOU HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO, DON'T YOU?
CHRIS.
YOUR SISTERS ARE WAITING FOR YOU.
I GET IT. NICE TRICK! YOU REALLY HAD ME GOING FOR A MINUTE.
COUNT, STOP IT.
BUT... BUT...

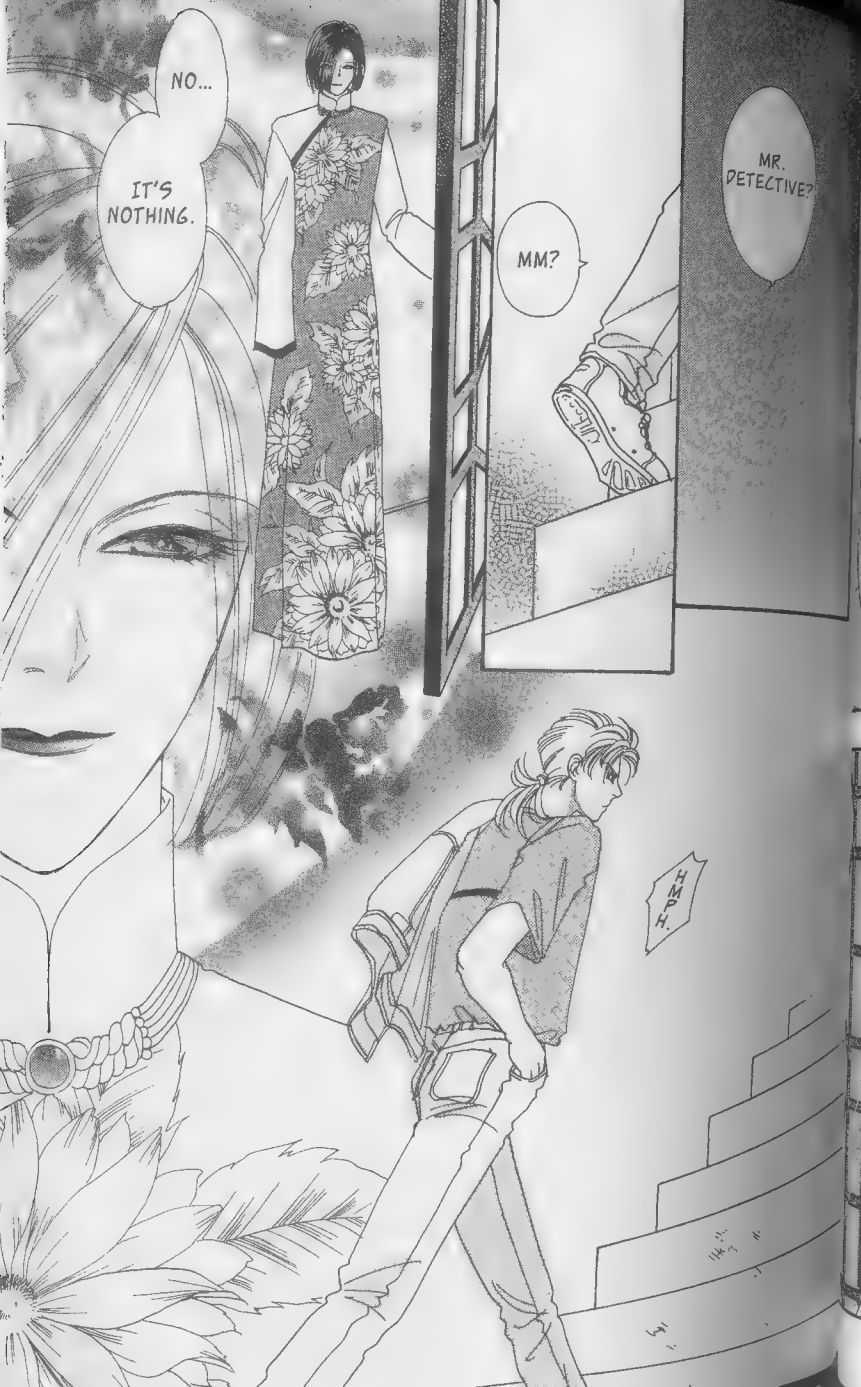
IS IT YOUR PACT WITH SHUKO?
THERE, THERE, DON'T CRY, CHRIS.

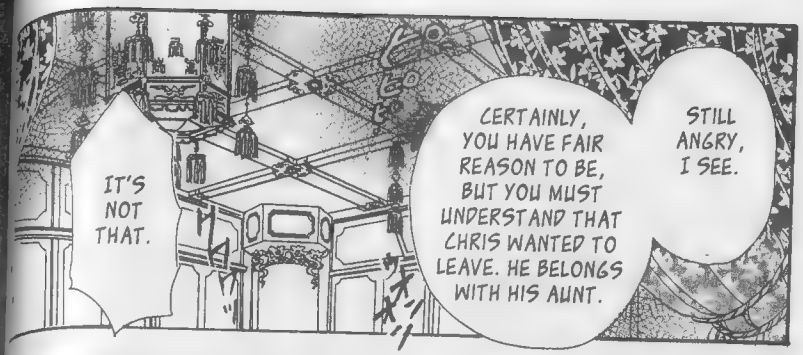
MY, MY...
WHAT'S THE MATTER?

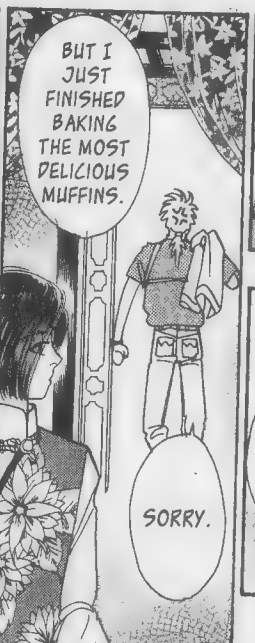
第2話／Disappearance

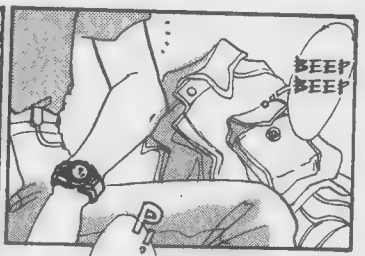
SHUT UP.
DETECTIVE, YOU ARE NO DOUBT AWARE THAT SMOKING IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH?

AND SO THE LITTLE LOST CHILD REGAINED HIS ABILITY TO SPEAK AND DEPARTED PARADISE...
...NEVER TO RETURN AGAIN.


NO...
IT'S NOTHING.
MM?
MR. DETECTIVE?
HMPH.


IT'S NOT THAT.
CERTAINLY, YOU HAVE FAIR REASON TO BE, BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT CHRIS WANTED TO LEAVE. HE BELONGS WITH HIS AUNT.
STILL ANGRY, I SEE.


BUT I JUST FINISHED BAKING THE MOST DELICIOUS MUFFINS.
SORRY.


BEEP BEEP

P!
ORCOT.
I'M ON MY WAY.

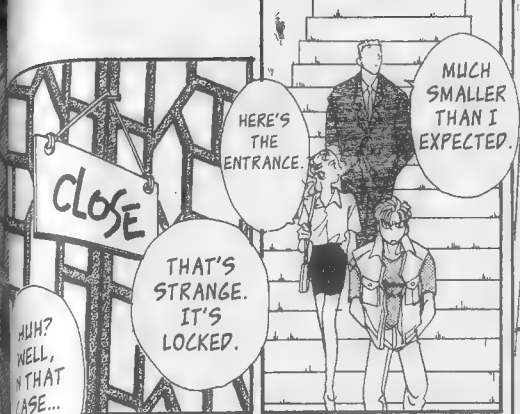
THE COUNT CONSIDERS HUMAN LIFE TO BE LESS VALUABLE THAN ANIMAL LIFE.
AAAH! IT WAS THE SAME WITH MONICA.
HE ALWAYS HAS.
HE MAY WEAR THAT RIDICULOUS GRIN OF HIS WHEN HE'S DEALING WITH PEOPLE...
...BUT WHEN YOU GET RIGHT DOWN TO IT... HE HATES THEM.
FAR AS HE'S CONCERNED, PEOPLE ARE AT THE BOTTOM OF DARWIN'S SCALE.
KNOCK
AGENT HOWELL?
GOOD. YOU'RE HERE, ORCOT.

WHY DON'T YOU GIVE CHRIS A CALL? I'M SURE HE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.
DOUR AS EVER, I SEE.
CHRIS IS FINE.
I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT.
A BOY THAT AGE NEEDS A PROPER FAMILY. HE'S BETTER OFF THERE.
HE HAS HIS VOICE BACK AND HE'S LIVING IN A BIG HOUSE WITH HIS AUNT AND UNCLE ON THE EAST COAST.
I MEAN, GODDAMMIT! THIS IS MY LITTLE BROTHER WE'RE TALKING ABOUT HERE!
IF CHRIS HAD BEEN A DAMN BIRD, I WOULD HAVE FELT AT LEAST A LITTLE SYMPATHETIC TOWARDS HIM. MAYBE SHOWN A LITTLE EMOTION WHEN HE LEFT.
WAIT, ARE YOU SAYING YOUR BROTHER'S A BIRD?
TO HIM, IT WAS NO DIFFERENT THAN TAKING IN SOME SICK LITTLE BIRD, NURSING IT BACK TO HEALTH, THEN THROWING IT OUT ON ITS ASS AND EXPECTING IT TO FLY!
WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND IS I!
ACTUALLY, I'M WRONG. IT WASN'T LIKE THAT.

I READ YOUR FILE.
Uh...
ALL THE MURDERS, DISAPPEARANCES AND OTHER INCIDENTS YOU'VE TRIED TO PIN ON COUNT D...
YOU'VE BLAMED HIM FOR EVERYTHING SHY OF THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION. IT WAS AN AMUSING READ, TO SAY THE LEAST.
Filled with typos too...
ALL YOUR EVIDENCE IS CIRCUMSTANTIAL. YOU HAVE NOTHING THAT PROVES D HAS BROKEN SO MUCH AS A PARKING VIOLATION.
...ET ALONE ...EAL ...UGS OR ...OMMIT ...RDER.
FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN MONITORING THE COUNT FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS, YOU SURE DON'T HAVE MUCH ON THE GUY.
HOW OLD HE IS? WHERE HE WAS BORN?
DO YOU EVEN KNOW COUNT D'S REAL NAME?
WELL, YOU SEE...
FORGET IT. BUT IT'S OBVIOUS I SHOULD'VE GOTTEN INVOLVED MUCH SOONER.

COUNT D HAS SOME FRIENDS IN VERY HIGH PLACES. HE'S TIGHT WITH THE MAYOR, ALL THE MAJOR MEDIA EXECUTIVES AND POWER BROKERS, AND HAS TIES TO THE CHINESE MOB.
IT'S LITTLE WONDER YOU'VE HIT A BRICK WALL EVERY TIME YOU'VE TRIED TO LAUNCH AN INVESTIGATION.
HOWEVER, THAT CHANGES TODAY.
AS A FEDERAL OFFICER, I DON'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE SAME CHANNELS THAT YOU DO.
I'M GOING TO GET A WARRANT FOR ARREST, YES, BUT THIS IS STILL OFFICIALLY IN YOUR JURISDICTION.
PUTTING THE CUFFS ON HIM WILL BE YOUR JOB, MR. ORCOT.
YOU'RE GONNA ARREST HIM?
MEANING?
spoof of pounding

D?!
HE MUST HAVE STEPPED OUT.

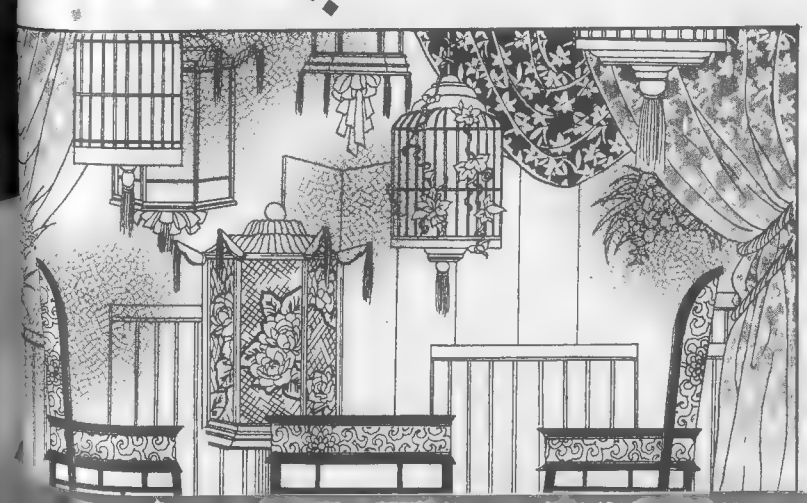

CLOSE
HERE'S THE ENTRANCE.
MUCH SMALLER THAN I EXPECTED.
THAT'S STRANGE. IT'S LOCKED.
HUH? WELL, IN THAT CASE...

どわ!!!
...ALLOW ME!!

COUNT D

HEY, TETSU!
PON-CHAN?!
NO... IT'S TOO QUIET.
I DON'T HEAR THE ANIMALS.

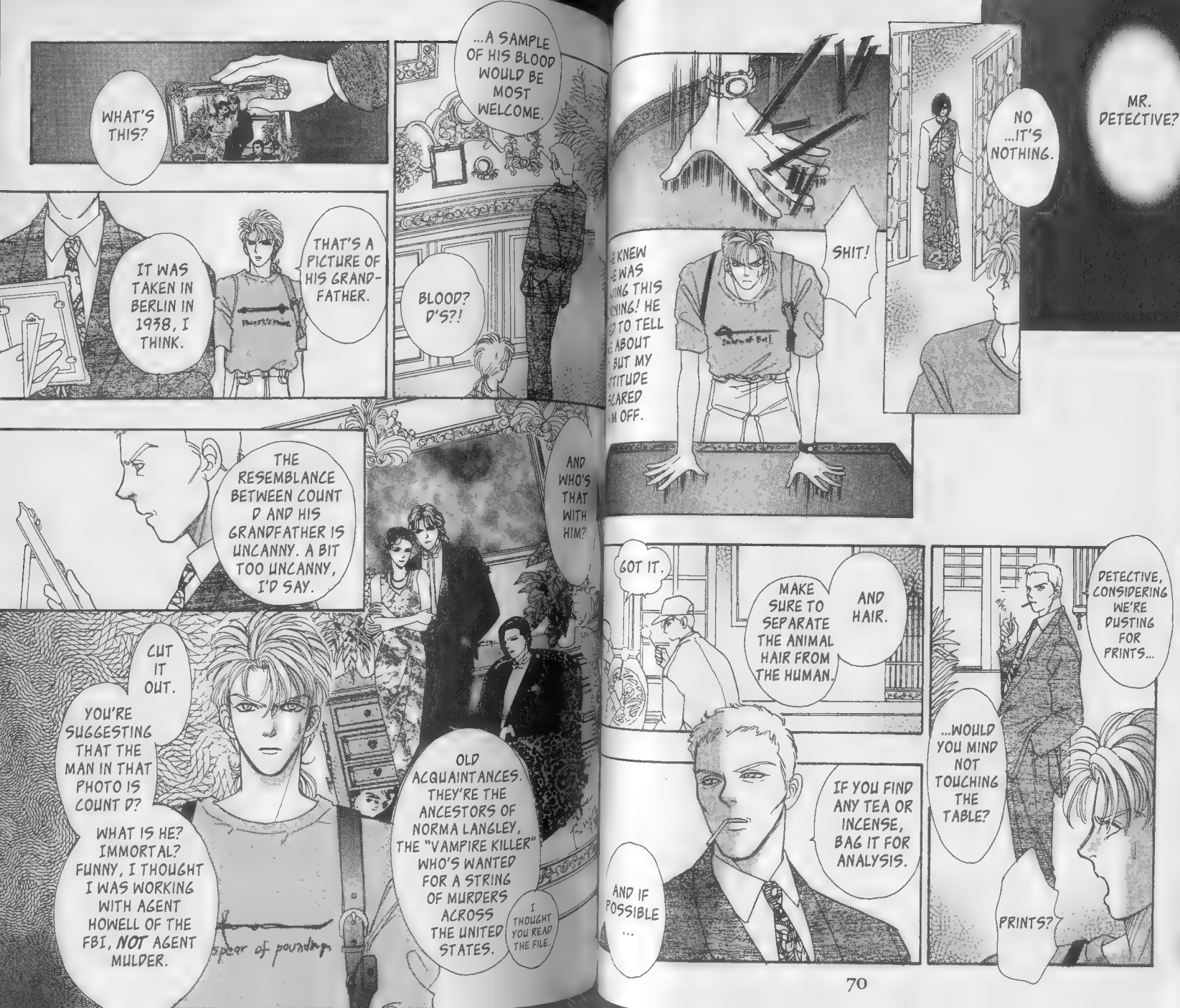
PLEASE ...
GIVE ME SOME FREAKIN' CREDIT.
YOU DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING THAT WOULD HAVE TIPPED HIM OFF, DID YOU?



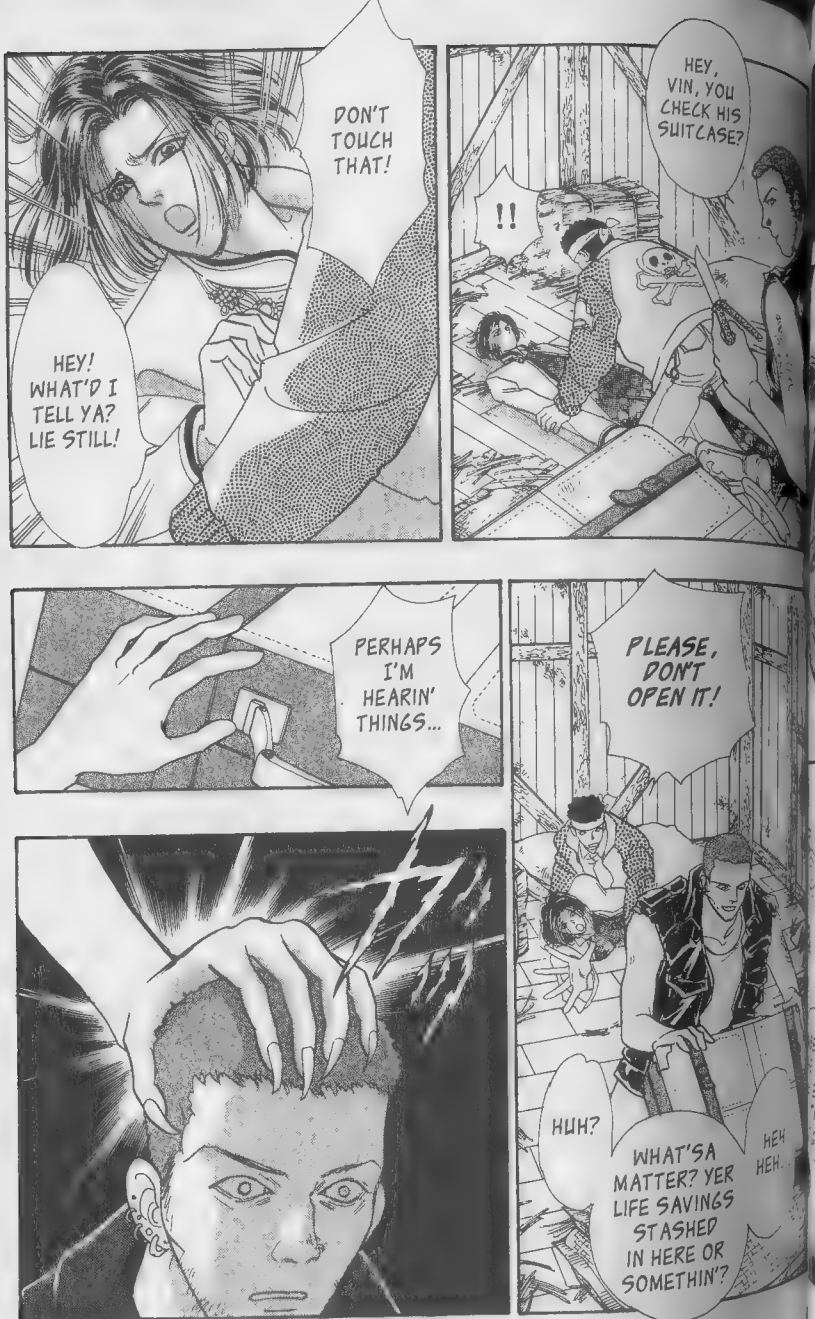
LET'S SEE...
THEY'RE PROBABLY ALL INSIDE.
HEY, COUNT!
?!
NO...
NO FUCKING WAY! THERE WAS A MAZE OF CORRIDORS BACK HERE!
WITH LOTS AND LOTS OF DIFFERENT DOORS!
WHAT THE HELL?
SHIT! HOW THE HELL DID HE DO THIS?!
NO USE.
GUESTS WANDER AROUND THE SAME CORRIDOR AGAIN AND AGAIN, IMAGINING THAT THEY'RE PASSING THROUGH ENDLESS ROOMS AND HALLWAYS.
IT'S THE SAME WAY HE MAKES HIS PETS LOOK HUMAN. IT'S ALL DONE THROUGH THE POWER OF SUGGESTION. IT'S ALL A TRICK.
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
WE'VE TRACKED HIM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. ONCE HE KNOWS THAT WE'VE FOUND HIM...
...HE FLEES TO A NEW CITY, AND SETS UP A PET SHOP IN THAT CITY'S CHINATOWN.
...AND MONOTONOUS WAY OF SPEAKING.
ONCE UNDER THEIR INFLUENCE, THE COUNT IS ABLE TO PLANT SUGGESTIONS WITH HIS ALLURING SMILE!!
AN ILLUSION CREATED BY DRINKING THE TEA AND SMELLING THE FRAGRANCES IN THE FRONT.
ILLUSION?!
IT'S AN ILLUSION.
THAT'S HOW HE OPERATES.

OUR ONLY HOPE OF CATCHING COUNT D IS KEEPING HIM IN L.A!
YEAH, ONE OF THOSE REALLY BIG ONES. HE ACTED LIKE IT WAS REAL IMPORTANT.
I SEE.
I'D LIKE TO HAVE A LOOK INSIDE THAT SUITCASE. MY GUESS IS THAT WHATEVER'S IN THERE IS EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED TO PUT HIM AWAY.
HE COULDN'T HAVE GONE FAR.
GOT IT.
CHECK THE AIRPORTS...
...HARBORS AND TRAIN STATIONS
WE DON'T OFTEN SEE LARGE TRAILERS. NARROW STREETS, YOU SEE.
A BIG TRAILER?
NO, I DON'T THINK I'VE SEEN ONE.
I REMEMBER WHEN THE COUNT FIRST MOVED IN.
HE SHOWED UP WALKING ALL BY HIMSELF...
HE WOULD COME IN EVERY MORNING, BUT I NEVER NOTICED ANYTHING STRANGE.
A SUITCASE?
WAIT A MINUTE! THERE WAS SOMETHING! THE FIRST TIME HE CAME IN, HE WAS CARRYING A LARGE LEATHER SUITCASE.
THIS SHOP WAS FULL OF ANIMALS! HE HAD HUNDREDS OF THEM!
HOW THE HELL DOES HE MOVE AROUND WITH SO MANY PETS?!

HMM... FLYING WOULD MAKE THE MOST SENSE.
OR MAYBE A TRAIN.
OR A CRUISE!
KYU..
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, I HAVE TO LEAVE THE CITY.
AND THE SOONER THE BETTER.
THIS TIME, I THINK, SOMEPLACE FAR...
キキィッ!
HEY, SHORTY!
YOU LOOKIN' FOR A RIDE?


WHAT'S THIS?
IT WAS TAKEN IN BERLIN IN 1938, I THINK.
THAT'S A PICTURE OF HIS GRAND-FATHER.
...A SAMPLE OF HIS BLOOD WOULD BE MOST WELCOME.
BLOOD? D'S?!
THE RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN COUNT D AND HIS GRANDFATHER IS UNCANNY. A BIT TOO UNCANNY, I'D SAY.
AND WHO'S THAT WITH HIM?
CUT IT OUT.
YOU'RE SUGGESTING THAT THE MAN IN THAT PHOTO IS COUNT D?
WHAT IS HE? IMMORTAL? FUNNY, I THOUGHT I WAS WORKING WITH AGENT HOWELL OF THE FBI, NOT AGENT MULDER.
OLD ACQUAINTANCES. THEY'RE THE ANCESTORS OF NORMA LANGLEY, THE "VAMPIRE KILLER" WHO'S WANTED FOR A STRING OF MURDERS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES.
I THOUGHT YOU READ THE FILE.
SHIT!
NO ...IT'S NOTHING.
MR. DETECTIVE?
GOT IT.
MAKE SURE TO SEPARATE THE ANIMAL HAIR FROM THE HUMAN.
AND HAIR.
IF YOU FIND ANY TEA OR INCENSE, BAG IT FOR ANALYSIS.
AND IF POSSIBLE ...
DETECTIVE, CONSIDERING WE'RE DUSTING FOR PRINTS...
...WOULD YOU MIND NOT TOUCHING THE TABLE?
PRINTS?

THAT'S ...
SO YOU'VE MET HIS FATHER, THEN, HAVE YOU?
TWENTY YEARS AGO, A PERSON CALLING HIMSELF COUNT D SHOWED UP IN WASHINGTON. WHEN HE VACATED HIS SHOP, LOCAL AGENTS WERE ABLE TO LIFT A FULL SET OF PRINTS.
WE'RE DUSTING FOR PRINTS HERE BECAUSE I INTEND TO PROVE TO YOU THAT THE COUNT THAT YOU KNOW IS THE EXACT SAME PERSON.
AND IF WE CAN GET A BLOOD SAMPLE...
...WE'LL BE ABLE TO DETERMINE WHAT EXACTLY COUNT D IS, BECAUSE LAST TIME I CHECKED, HUMANS WEREN'T IMMORTAL.
IN ONE DOCUMENTED INCIDENT, HE GAVE AN EXOTIC BIRD TO QUEEN VICTORIA ON BEHALF OF A FRENCH BARON. IT CREATED QUITE A STIR AMONG THE ROYAL FAMILY.
DETECTIVE ORCOT, COUNT D'S FIRST RECORDED APPEARANCES WERE IN EUROPEAN SOCIAL CIRCLES IN THE LATE 1800'S.
AFTER THE START OF THE 20TH CENTURY, REPORTS BEGAN SPRINGING UP OF A CHINESE COUNT WHO WOULD ROAM FROM CITY TO CITY OPENING PET STORES.
HE SPECIALIZED IN RARE AND EXOTIC PETS, AND CALLED HIMSELF D.
HE'D ONLY STAY IN EACH CITY FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS, BUT EVERYONE WHO SAW HIM DESCRIBED HIM AS A YOUNG MAN IN HIS LATE TWENTIES.
A LOT OF PEOPLE LOOK LIKE YOUNGER VERSIONS OF THEIR FATHERS AND GRANDFATHERS.
AND ASIANS AGE VERY WELL. IT'S OFTEN HARD TO TELL HOW OLD THEY ARE JUST BY LOOKING AT THEM.
ASK YOURSELF, DETECTIVE, IF YOU WERE IMMORTAL, WHAT WOULD BE THE BEST WAY TO HIDE THE FACT THAT YOU DIDN'T AGE? I'D KEEP MOVING, NOT STAYING IN ONE PLACE FOR TOO LONG.


DON'T TOUCH THAT!
HEY! WHAT'D I TELL YA? LIE STILL!
HEY, VIN, YOU CHECK HIS SUITCASE?
!!
PERHAPS I'M HEARIN' THINGS...
PLEASE, DON'T OPEN IT!
HUH?
WHAT'SA MATTER? YER LIFE SAVINGS STASHED IN HERE OR SOMETHIN'?
HEH HEH..

WE GAVE YOU A RIDE, NOW IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO TAKE US FOR ONE, SISTER.
HEH HEH...
MY APOLOGIES, BUT I'M NOT A SISTER.
VIN, MAN, WOULD YOU HURRY THE FUCK UP!
JESUS! WHAT'S WITH THESE CLOTHES?
AND WHAT A PURTY LITTLE SISTER YER GONNA MAKE.
WELL, TONIGHT YOU ARE.
NOW, LIE STILL AND RELAX, AND THIS WILL BE OVER BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.

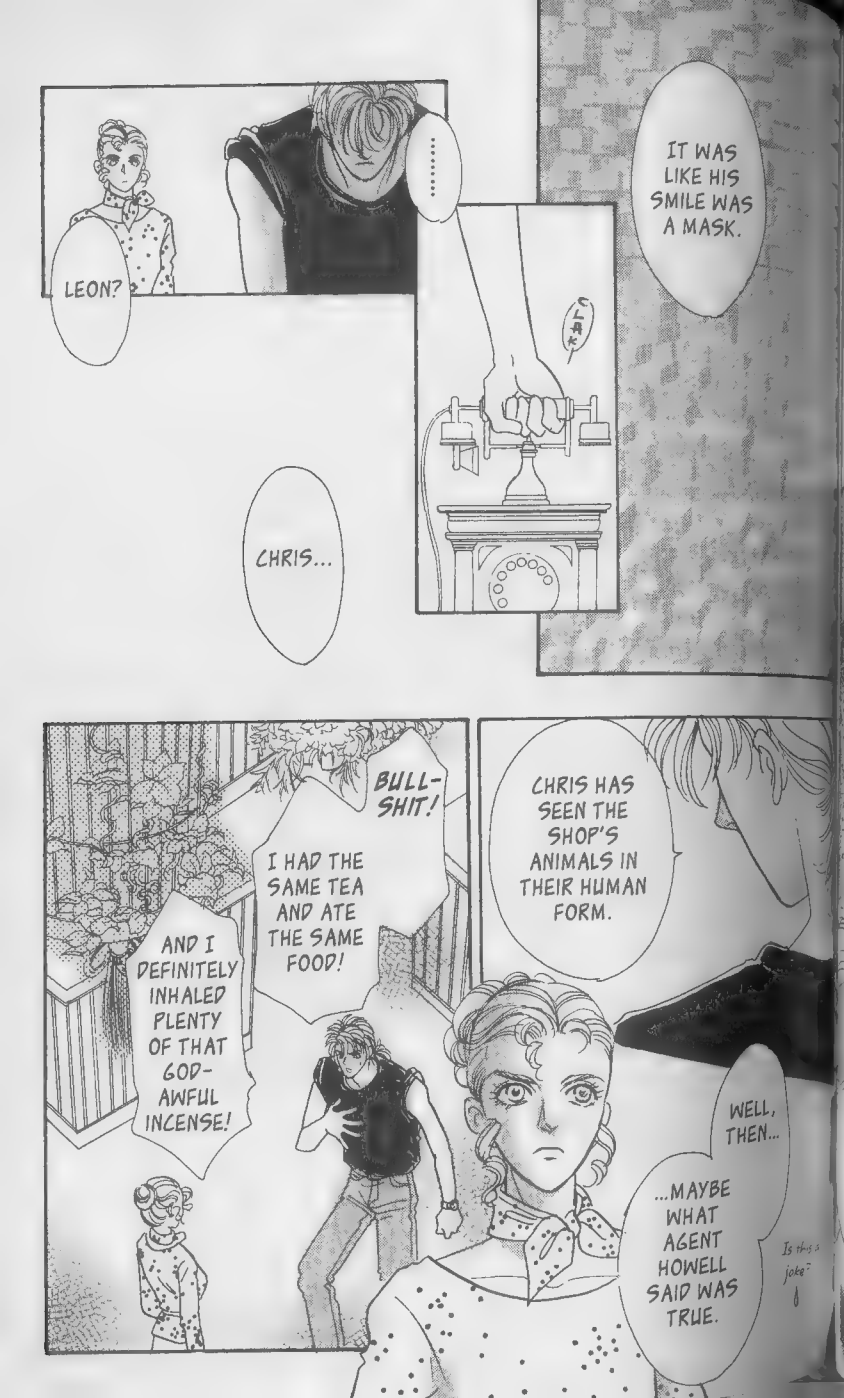
SLURP
IT'SSS BEEN FAR TOO LONG SSSINCE WE FEASSSTED ON THE FLESSSH OF OTHERSSS.
YES, IT HAS.
PRRRIP
SNAP
CRRRUNCH
GULP
CRACK
LEAVE IT. MONEY DOESN'T INTEREST ME.
BUT WE NEED IT.
THEY HAD A FAIR BIT OF MONEY ON THEM, COUNT.
GRRR...
SSS...
?!
WHAT THE FUCK? WHERE... WHERE'D THEY ALL...?
...BUT I BELIEVE MY FRIEND TOLD YOU TO KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF OF THAT.
HUH?!
WHAT THE FUCK ARE THOSE THINGS?!
AAAAAAAAH!!!

PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT.
...A PLACE TO STAY...
...AND I COULD SURE GO FOR SOME DESSERT!
WE NEED NEW CLOTHES...
AH, SO THIS WAY IS EAST.
GOODNESS... WHERE ARE WE?

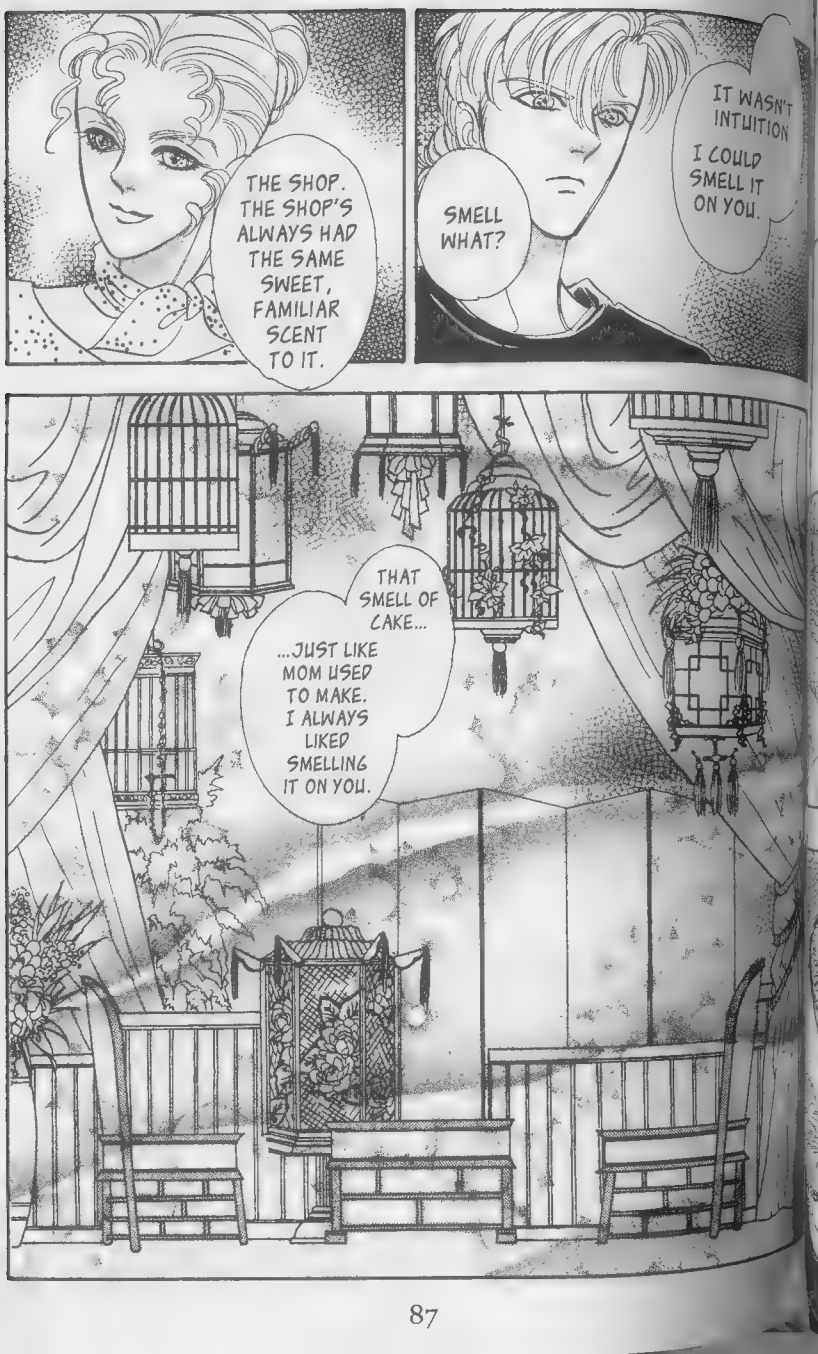
WHAT'S WRONG? EVERY-THING OKAY?
HUH? CHRIS?!
HUH?!
WELL, HE'S, UM....
WHERE'S THE COUNT?
HEY, BIG BRO? YOU SAW THEM TOO...
...DIDN'T YOU?
THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED AT THE COUNT'S SHOP?
EH...
T-CHAN, PON-CHAN, FELIPE...
...AND EVERYONE ELSE I PLAYED WITH...
LEON, IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS.
I DON'T THINK HE'S COMING BACK.
NICE TO SEE YOU SITTING ON YOUR ASS WHILE EVERYONE ELSE IS BUSY BUSTING THEIRS.
DON'T START WITH ME TODAY.
SHIT, LEON! DID YOU SMOKE ALL THESE?
I-I-I DON'T SMART!
RRRRR
BIG BRO?
R...
HELLO?
RRRRRR

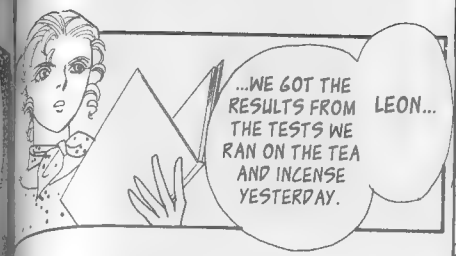
IT'S OKAY. IT JUST CAUGHT ME A BIT OFF-GUARD.
JOSIE?
!!
SORRY FOR THIS.
EXCUSE ME, LEON?
YEAH, I KNOW. IT'S JUST THAT MOM BAKED A CAKE TODAY...
...AND WE HAD IT WITH TEA...
NO.
I MEAN THE PEOPLE. THERE WERE PEOPLE AT THE SHOP.
LOTS OF THEM!
YOU MEAN THE ANIMALS?
HE'D MAKE A CAKE, AND EVERYONE AT THE SHOP WOULD COME OUT AND EAT IT.
THE COUNT WAS REALLY GOOD AT MAKING SWEETS.
CHRIS...
SAM...
HARDLY SURPRISING THAT HE'D MISS THE PLACE.
HE LIVED THERE FOR NEARLY A YEAR.

THERE WERE PEOPLE, LEON...
...IN ALL THOSE ROOMS BEHIND THE SHOP.
LOTS AND LOTS OF PEOPLE. MEN AND WOMEN AND BOYS AND GIRLS. THEY WOULD SING AND DANCE EVERY NIGHT. THE ROOMS WERE HUGE!
AND THERE WERE COURTYARDS, GARDENS AND JUNGLES...
...A HUGE LAKE AND A BEACH, EVEN.
DON'T YOU REMEMBER THAT NIGHT WE WATCHED THE MOON TOGETHER?
OH, CHRIS ...
THAT WASN'T ALL A MIRAGE, WAS IT? WAS IT, BIG BRO?!


LEON?
.....
CLAK
IT WAS LIKE HIS SMILE WAS A MASK.
CHRIS...
BULL-SHIT!
I HAD THE SAME TEA AND ATE THE SAME FOOD!
AND I DEFINITELY INHALED PLENTY OF THAT GOD-AWFUL INCENSE!
CHRIS HAS SEEN THE SHOP'S ANIMALS IN THEIR HUMAN FORM.
WELL, THEN...
...MAYBE WHAT AGENT HOWELL SAID WAS TRUE.
Is this a joke?

LEON...
DON'T WORRY, LEON. CHRIS WILL BE FINE.
SAM...
CHRIS, I BELIEVE YOU.
WHEN I WAS LOOKING FOR YOU AT THE SHOP, I SAW THEM.
A BIT TOO FINE, IF YOU ASK ME.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE COUNT. HE'S FINE WITH IT.
...WITHOUT EVEN THINKING TO ASK HOW YOU OR THE COUNT FELT ABOUT IT.
...WHEN SAM AND I CAME TO THE SHOP, WE NEVER CALLED TO LET YOU KNOW WE WERE COMING. WE JUST SHOWED UP, AND WOUND UP TAKING CHRIS HOME WITH US...
HUH?
I'M NOT SURE.
I COULDN'T HELP FEELING THAT THE SMILE WAS FAKE.
...IT WASN'T GENUINE.
HE NEVER STOPPED SMILING, BUT...


THE SHOP. THE SHOP'S ALWAYS HAD THE SAME SWEET, FAMILIAR SCENT TO IT.
SMELL WHAT?
IT WASN'T INTUITION I COULD SMELL IT ON YOU.
THAT SMELL OF CAKE...
...JUST LIKE MOM USED TO MAKE. I ALWAYS LIKED SMELLING IT ON YOU.


LEON...
...WE GOT THE RESULTS FROM THE TESTS WE RAN ON THE TEA AND INCENSE YESTERDAY.

TOTALLY CLEAN. NO TOXINS, WHATSOEVER.

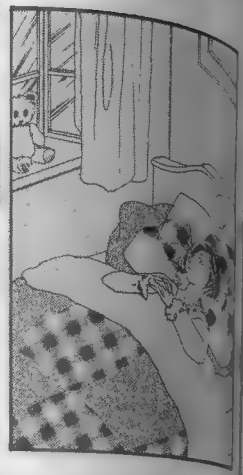
I DON'T GET IT, JILL. WHAT EXACTLY... ...ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

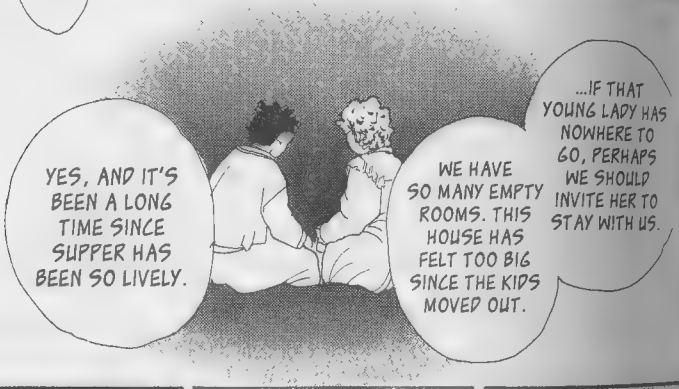
I LIED.
LEON...
DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU ASKED ME HOW I ALWAYS KNEW WHEN YOU'D BEEN BY THE SHOP? I TOLD YOU IT WAS INTUITION.
.....?

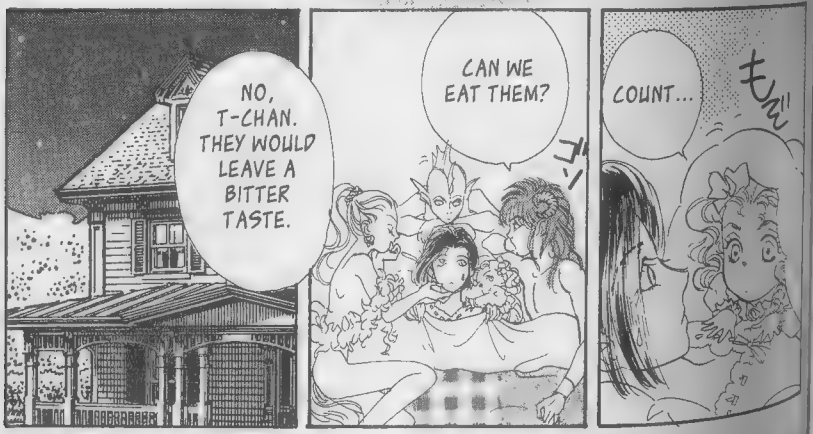
BUT I NEVER SAW ANYTHING! NOT A SINGLE GODDAMN THING!
I NEVER HEARD THEM TALK!
THEY WERE ANIMALS! NOTHING MORE THAN SIMPLE HOUSE PETS!

AH... THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
AND HELP YOURSELF TO AS MUCH PIE AS YOU'D LIKE.
IT SUITS YOU SO WELL.
THEY'RE YOURS IF YOU WANT THEM. THEY BELONGED TO OUR DAUGHTER.
YOU'LL TRY THIS ONE TOO, WON'T YOU?
AH...
I KNOW! THE PAPER'S BEEN FULL OF STORIES ABOUT ALL SORTS OF TERRIBLE INCIDENTS LATELY.
YOU SEEM RATHER YOUNG... ...TO BE HITCHHIKING ACROSS THE UNITED STATES ALL ALONE.

I WONDER ...




YES, AND IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE SUPPER HAS BEEN SO LIVELY.
WE HAVE SO MANY EMPTY ROOMS. THIS HOUSE HAS FELT TOO BIG SINCE THE KIDS MOVED OUT.
...IF THAT YOUNG LADY HAS NOWHERE TO GO, PERHAPS WE SHOULD INVITE HER TO STAY WITH US.


NO, T-CHAN. THEY WOULD LEAVE A BITTER TASTE.
CAN WE EAT THEM?
COUNT...
ｴｳｨ!

ALL THE STIFFS WERE VICTIMS OF ANIMAL ATTACKS, WHICH ISN'T UNUSUAL FOR THE AREA, BUT THE TIMING AND LOCATION OF THE DEATHS...
...AT DESERTED HOUSES AND CHEAP MOTELS ALONG THE COLORADO RIVER.
OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS, THERE'VE BEEN SEVERAL VIOLENT DEATHS...
...AND THE FACT THAT EVERY ONE OF THE VICTIMS HAD PRIORS FOR ABDUCTION AND SEXUAL ASSAULT, INDICATES THAT THERE'S MORE GOING ON HERE. IT APPEARS WE HAVE AN EASTWARD -BOUND SERIAL KILLER ON OUR HANDS...
HOLD ON A MINUTE, DETECTIVE.
...AND THAT VICIOUS ANIMALS ARE HIS WEAPON OF CHOICE. SOUND LIKE IT COULD BE ANYONE WE KNOW?
LET'S GO!

?
WELL, PERHAPS YOU CAN DO ME ONE LAST FAVOR?
IF YOU'RE EVER HARD UP, YOU CAN COME BACK ANYTIME.
SO, WE CAN'T CONVINCE YOU TO STAY?
NO, BUT THANK YOU.
OF...OF COURSE HE'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM.
Where'd we come from?
OH, HE'S ADORABLE!
COULD YOU TAKE CARE OF THIS LITTLE ONE FOR ME?
I'm afraid he's too fragile for such a long journey.
huff
There, there. Are you hungry?
We need to name him.

FUCKING FED ASS-HOLE!
I HATE THESE BUREAU SONS OF BITCHES!
SHIT!
HE REMINDS ME A LOT OF YOU.
OH, COME ON! GET REAL!
I'M NOTHING LIKE THAT LYING SACK OF SHIT!
SAME NASTY STARE.
Same heavy smoking.
FUCK!
MILD STAR

HOLD ON, OLD MAN!
WHAT ABOUT THE PRINTS?
GET THE RESULTS BACK YET?
SORRY, KID, BUT THAT INFO'S RESTRICTED.
WHAT ?!
THE COLORADO RIVER'S WELL OUTSIDE YOUR JURISDICTION.
YOU'RE OFF THIS CASE.
IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE?!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR SPEECH ABOUT ME BEING THE ONE TO PUT THE CUFFS ON HIM?
LEON, AGENT HOWELL IS RIGHT.
COUNT D ISN'T OUR PROBLEM ANYMORE. YOU'VE GOT TO LET IT GO.
CHIEF!

UH...
SHHH.
WHA--
D?!
WHERE THE FUCK HAVE--
WE CAN'T TALK HERE, SO PLEASE... GET IN.
WHAT?
FINE.
QUICKLY NOW.

MR. DETECTIVE?

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TEA?
HERE WE GO.
QUITE AN ABRUPT GREETING.
YOU CONNIVING LITTLE PRICK! WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?! YOU HAVE THE GODDAMN FBI LOOKING FOR YOU, YOU KNOW!
YOUR FACE HAS THE DESPAIR OF A YOUNG MONKEY WHO'S STRAYED TOO FAR FROM HIS GROUP.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU BABBLING ABOUT?
HUH?
WE'RE NOT HEADING BACK TO THE SHOP?
THAT WOULDN'T BE VERY SMART, WOULD IT? AFTER ALL, I HAVE THE FBI LOOKING FOR ME.

THANK YOU FOR STOPPING. COULD I TROUBLE YOU FOR --
I FINALLY HAVE YOU, YOU SON OF A BITCH.
!!

OH, MY...
AND WITH CIVILIZATION JUST A LITTLE FARTHER.
QUITE A DOWN-POUR.
HERE WE GO!
Getting quite used to this.
HI THERE!

THAT MAN'S LIKE A RABID DOG. ONE LITTLE SLIP-UP AND HE'LL HAVE US FOR LUNCH!
SHERIFF, YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHO WE'RE DEALING WITH HERE.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU--?!
THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO REASON FOR YOU TO HAVE--
LOOK FOR BLOOD-STAINS.
I WANT A CLEAN SAMPLE.
BESIDES, MY SHOT MERELY GRAZED HIM. HE WON'T DIE FROM IT, AS LONG AS HE GETS HELP...
I'M BLEEDING!
KYUI

SHIT!
AFTER HIM!
UGH!

.....
UH...
FOUND HIM!
HE'S OVER THERE!

第3話 Duplication

MY GOD...
I RENTED THE ROOF AND THE THREE FLOORS BELOW IT.
IT'S A LOVELY OPEN AIR GARDEN, IS IT NOT?
MM?
OH, YEAH.
GARDEN FLOOR, PLEASE.
Count? The person with you is carrying a pistol and a mobile phone.
THANK YOU, BUT THIS MAN IS MY GUEST. THERE'S NO NEED FOR CONCERN.
Welcome back, Count D.
As you wish. Good day, Count D.
.....

LET'S HAVE OUR TEA ON THE TOP FLOOR.
IS THIS ANOTHER ILLUSION?
HOLD ON, LEON.
THIS ROOM LOOKS LARGER THAN ALL THE FLOORS PUT TOGETHER.
WAIT A MINUTE! WHERE'S G-CHAN?
AND PON-CHAN AND TETSU?
.....!!
THE VIEW IS SPLENDID, BUT THE WIND IS QUITE STRONG HERE.

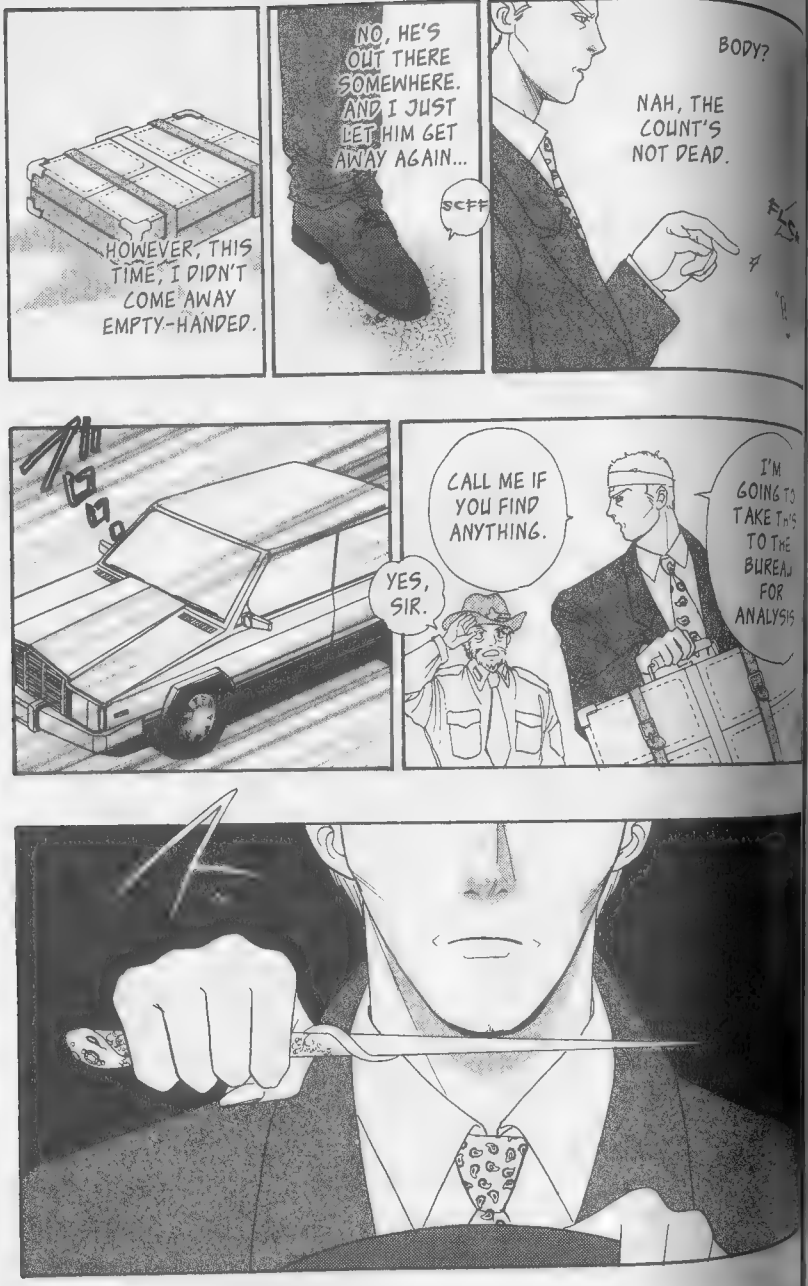
WE'RE SEARCHING FOR IT.
IT SEEMS TO HAVE FLOATED DOWN-STREAM.
M-MY BAG?
!!
PRINCE OF THE BLACK DRAGONS ...
TH-THANK YOU, HIGHNESS.
I DO NOT BELIEVE THEY CAN TRACK YOU THROUGH UPSTREAM RAPIDS.
IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW.
.....
NO.
COUNT, PLEASE CHEER UP.
JUST A LITTLE FARTHER AND WE'LL FINALLY BE OUT OF THE FOREST. THEN WE CAN REST.
ｷｬｰ!

COO COO...
COO ROO ROO!
COO ROO ROO!
BUT THOSE ARE...
...PASSENGER PIGEONS?
I NO LONGER WISH TO BE AMONG HUMANS.
COUNT ?!
PURSUED... HUNTED... HATED... ALWAYS RUNNING... NO MORE.
I'VE HAD ENOUGH.
COUNT, HANG IN THERE!
COUNT !!

...YOUR PAIN...
...YOUR SADNESS, YOUR ANGER...
I REMEMBER IT ALL TOO WELL!
NO, I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN...

BUFFALO... THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF NORTH AMERICA...

AGENT HOWELL, WE FOUND THE FUGITIVE'S SUITCASE.
DID YOU OPEN IT?
IT'S LOCKED, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WHATEVER'S INSIDE IS OKAY.
GOD ONLY KNOWS WHAT WE MIGHT FIND IN HERE.
I DON'T WANT TO OPEN IT OUT IN THE OPEN LIKE THIS.
NOT YET. THE RAIN'S WASHED MOST OF IT AWAY.
WHAT ABOUT BLOOD-STAINS?
HAVE YOU FOUND ME A SUITABLE SAMPLE?
AND I REMEMBER MY VOW TO AVENGE YOUR SUFFERING BY PUNISHING THOSE RESPONSIBLE-- THE HUMANS!


HOWEVER, THIS TIME, I DIDN'T COME AWAY EMPTY-HANDED.
NO, HE'S OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. AND I JUST LET HIM GET AWAY AGAIN...
SCFF
BODY?
NAH, THE COUNT'S NOT DEAD.
FLS
CALL ME IF YOU FIND ANYTHING.
YES, SIR.
I'M GOING TO TAKE THIS TO THE BUREAU FOR ANALYSIS

NO, BUT...
WHAT? DID YOU FIND SOME BLOOD?
SHERIFF! COME TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.
I'M NOT INTERESTED IN FLOWERS. WHAT DO YOU HAVE ON D?
UH...
NOTHING ...YET.
THE STREAM'S VERY MUDDY.
MAYBE HIS BODY FLOATED FARTHER DOWNRIVER.
...THESE FLOWERS AREN'T NATIVE TO THIS AREA.
THEY'RE ALL ALONG THE PATH HE TOOK TO THE RIVER.

I WISH TO THANK YOU...
D...
YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ME, HAVEN'T YOU?
CHRIST, YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER!
...
HELLO, D.
...FOR PICKING UP MY BAG FOR ME.
A WARN-ING...
YOU MIGHT WANT TO BE CAREFUL. EVERYONE'S RATHER HUNGRY AT THE MOMENT.
NOT JUST YET. NICE TRY, THOUGH, MR. AGENT.
I'LL BET. AND I'LL BET NOW THAT YOU HAVE YOUR BAG BACK, YOU HAVE NO MORE USE FOR ME, RIGHT?

THAT'S OVER A DAY'S DRIVE AWAY.
YOU'LL HAVE TO TURN AROUND.
FATHER'S BACK IN LOS ANGELES.
YES, I'D SAY THAT CHOKER SUITS YOU QUITE WELL.
.....
DO DRIVE CAREFULLY, NOW.

PLEASE.
YOU STILL USING THAT OLD ROUTINE?
EYES ON THE ROAD, MR. AGENT!
FATHER?
I BELIEVE YOU HAVE ME CONFUSED WITH MY FATHER, MR. AGENT.
WELL, IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME...
... PERHAPS WE SHOULD GO MEET FATHER.
YOUR FINGER-PRINTS ARE IDENTICAL!
THE PRINTS YOU LEFT AT THE PET SHOP MATCH THE ONES WE LIFTED FROM YOUR PLACE IN WASHINGTON 20 YEARS AGO!
IT'S NO ROUTINE. IT'S TRUE.
MUCH AS I WISH IT WEREN'T.
Huh?
C'mon! Can I? I wanna Can I? eat him!

...THAT ALL THESE CREATURES ONCE LIVED. THEY MADE THEIR HOME HERE, ABOVE GROUND.
WELL, THEN...
...I HOPE IT DOESN'T FRIGHTEN YOU TO HEAR...

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME SUGAR WITH YOUR TEA, MR. DETECTIVE?
...WHICH THEY'VE SET OUT ALONG WITH THE MOST DELICIOUS BANANA FLOAT.
NOW, I'VE JUST DISCOVERED THE MOST TASTY MINT TEA...

JESUS...
WHAT ARE THESE THINGS?!
THEY LOOK LIKE... ... MONSTERS FROM A 50'S B-MOVIE.
THE KIND THAT ALWAYS USED TO GIVE ME NIGHTMARES.

He tricked me?
IT SEEMS YOUR REPUTATION IS WELL-EARNED.
WHAT REPUTATION? WHO ARE YOU?!
...YOU ARE QUITE THE DETECTIVE.
ALTHOUGH... IT IS MY FATHER WHO WAS BESTOWED WITH THAT RANK.
I AM COUNT D, AND NONE OTHER.
DO YOU TAKE ME FOR A TWIN BROTHER
OR PERHAPS A TWIN SISTER?
!!
COUNT D IS MY GRAND-FATHER.
WAIT A MINUTE ...
YOU'RE COUNT D'S OLD MAN!

WHO ARE YOU? YOU'RE NOT D, ARE YOU?
YOU KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT.

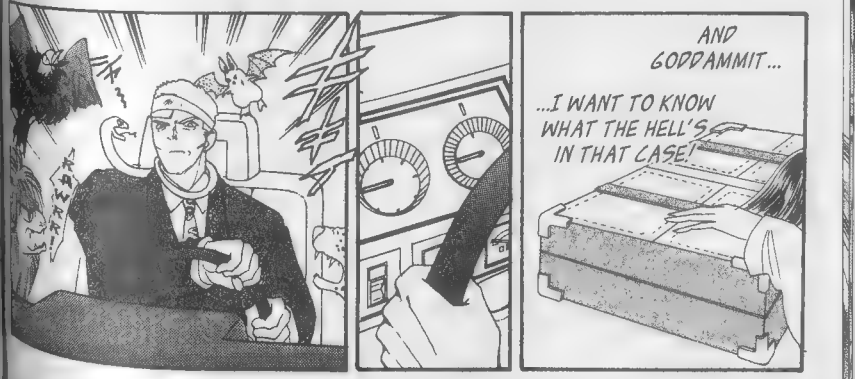
HOW IRONIC IT IS...
...TO HEAR THAT WORD SPOKEN...BY A HUMAN.
THEY GIVE IT THIS HORRIFIC LABEL AND TREAT IT AS A THREAT, REJECTING, EXTERMINATING, SLAUGHTERING IT INTO OBLIVION.
HUMANS DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MONSTER. TO THEM, A MONSTER IS ANYTHING THAT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND.
MONSTERS ARE SIMPLY YOUR WAY OF HIDING YOUR OWN IGNORANCE.
.....?
?!
YOU DO IT EVEN TO YOUR OWN SPECIES...
...STIGMATIZING AND RESENTING THOSE BORN WITH AN UNDESIRABLE COLOR OF SKIN.
THIS GUY DOESN'T LOOK A DAY OVER 30.
AGENT HOWELL COULDN'T HAVE BEEN RIGHT, COULD HE? COULD THEY BE...?
I'LL TELL WHAT'S ODD! WHAT'S ODD IS THE FACT THAT YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY DOESN'T SEEM TO AGE!
OLD MAN... THAT HAS SUCH AN ODD RING TO IT.
YOU'RE NOT HUMAN.
YOU AND YOUR SON... ...YOU'RE SOME SORT OF MONSTERS, AREN'T YOU?
MONSTER, YOU SAY?

WE ARE.
...THE PAINTERS OF UNSEEN IMAGES.
THE SINGERS OF UNHEARD SONGS.
THE CARETAKERS OF WHAT HAS BEEN LOST.
WE ARE THAT WHICH YOU CHOOSE TO IGNORE.
THAT IS WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU HUMANS.
FERO-CITY...
...CUNN-ING...
...RELENT-LESSNESS...
...AND COWARD-ICE...
I CAN'T MOVE!
DAMN YOU...
WHAT DID YOU PUT IN THAT TEA?
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE AFTER. YOU WANT MY BLOOD. SO JUST GET IT OVER WITH!
Lousy vampire!
WHO'D WANT TO DRINK THE BLOOD OF A HEAVY SMOKER LIKE YOU?
...WHAT THE... HELL...
...ARE YOU?!
TH-THEN...
WHILE SEVERAL VAMPIRES ARE OLD FRIENDS OF MINE...
...WE ARE NOT OF THE SAME RACE.

WE'RE GETTING LOW ON GAS.
THIS IS THE LAST STATION FOR MILES. WE NEED TO STOP.
Cafe
Station Gas
....
GOD, I HATE ROAD TRIPS.
ズビ...
MNCH
I GENERALLY LIKE MY MEAT FRESH, BUT THESE FROZEN TACOS ARE PRETTY GOOD!
MNCH
THANK YOU.

Hmm...
Zzz...
Crap
GRR...

THAT BULLET WENT CLEAN THROUGH HIS ARM.
HOW COULD IT HAVE ALREADY STOPPED BLEEDING?


AND GODDAMMIT...
...I WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE HELL'S IN THAT CASE!

I'M A LITTLE SURPRISED YOUR OLD MAN GOT MARRIED, ACTUALLY.
YOUR MOTHER... WHAT KIND OF WOMAN IS SHE?
WHAT ABOUT YOUR MOTHER? YOU SEE HER?
...NO.
I...
P.P.P.P
HELLO?
AGENT HOWELL? THIS IS DETECTIVE JILL FRESHNEY FROM THE L.A.P.D.
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
CORRECT. AND I SUPPOSE YOU WANT ME TO KEEP THIS BRIEF.
IT WOULD BE SUSPICIOUS NOT TO ANSWER, CORRECT?
P
P.P.P.P
.....

AH...
ALLOW ME... THERE.
.....
OH, YOU'RE A LIFESAVER, MR. AGENT!
IT PUZZLES ME, MR. AGENT... HOW DID YOU COME TO MEET MY FATHER?
THE FIRST TIME WAS 22 YEARS AGO...
I WAS A MEDICAL STUDENT AT S.U.N.Y., ALBANY.
I MET HIM IN THE GENETIC ENGINEERING LAB. HE WAS PASSING HIMSELF OFF...
...AS AN EXCHANGE STUDENT FROM HONG KONG.
AT THE TIME, S.U.N.Y.'S GENETIC ENGINEERING PROGRAM WAS THE BEST IN THE NATION. THEIR LAB WAS AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY.
I WAS RAISED BY MY GRANDFATHER, AGENT HOWELL. I HAVEN'T SEEN MY FATHER IN MANY YEARS.
YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
SO FATHER WASN'T LIVING AT THE PET SHOP?

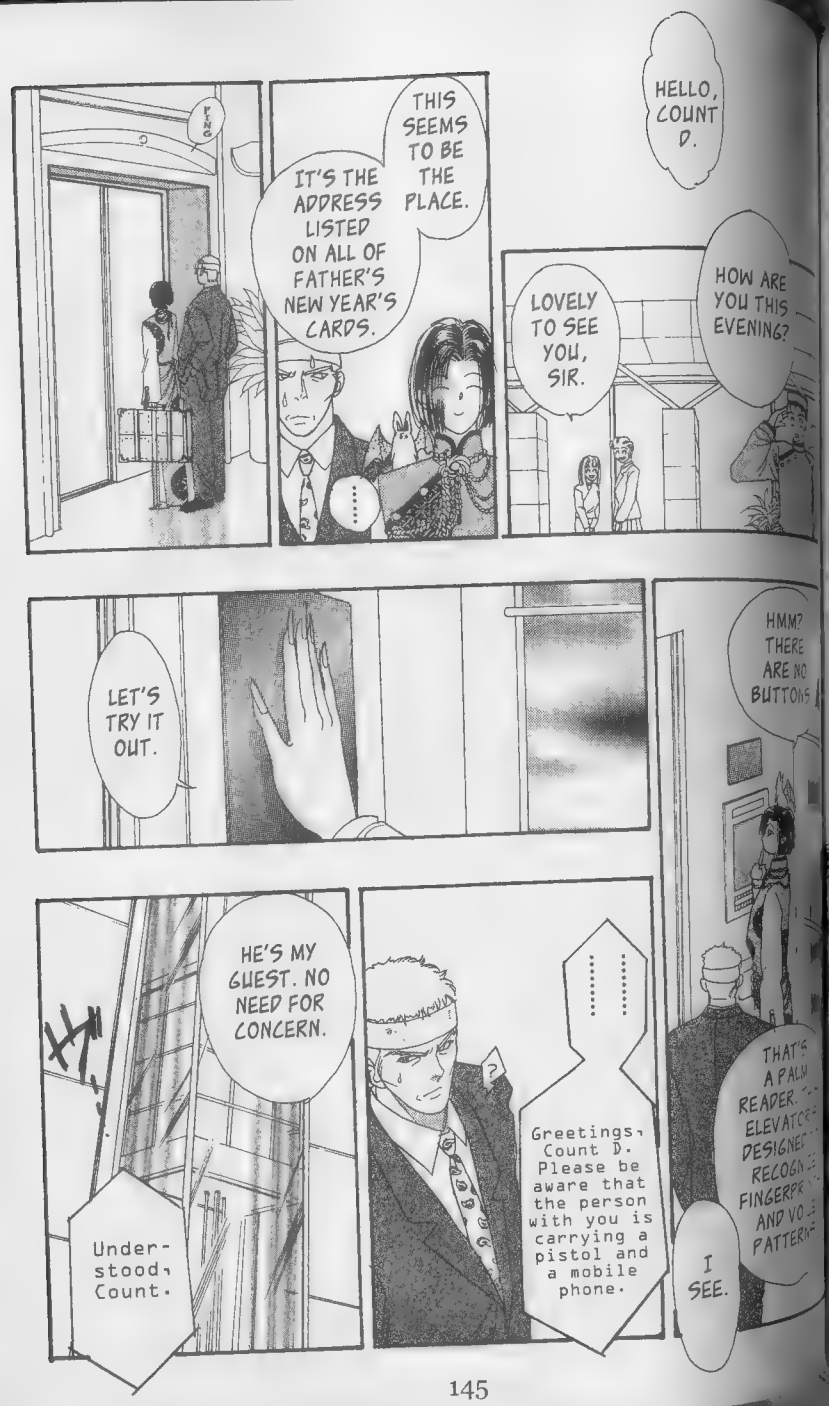
HUH?
UGH ...
WHERE AM I?
ガサッ

I THOUGHT HE MAY HAVE JOINED YOU IN YOUR PURSUIT OF THE COUNT.
He's gone too damn far!
HE'S DISAPPEARED. BEEN AWOL SINCE YESTERDAY.
NO, WHY?
IS THAT IDIOT COLLEAGUE OF MINE, DETECTIVE ORCOT, WITH YOU?
THANKS A LOT.
WELL, IF HE SHOWS UP DURING YOUR INVESTIGATION, SEND HIM HOME, WILL YOU?
P.
THAT IDIOT...
INDEED.
...IS PRETTY RECKLESS.
YOUR DETECTIVE FRIEND...

WHOA THERE!!
WHERE AM I?!
WHAT THE HELL?!
HUFF!
SHIT!
HUFF!
AAH!
EH?
AAAAAAAA
.....

OKAY, THAT HURT PRETTY FUCKING BAD FOR A DAMN DREAM!
YEEE CHOF H!!
UGH...
!!
THAT BLOOD IS REAL ENOUGH.
THAT'S RIGHT! IT WAS THE TIME I FOLLOWED THE COUNT INTO THAT MUSEUM LATE AT NIGHT.
I WOUND UP FALLING ASLEEP, HAVING A WEIRD-ASS DREAM, AND SHOOTING SOME FOSSILIZED SKELETON. NOT MY BEST MOMENT.
WAIT A SECOND!
WHERE'VE I SEEN THESE GUYS BEFORE?
BUT THESE GUYS WERE IN MY DREAM! THAT MEANS THAT I'M PROBABLY JUST ASLEEP AND DREAMING AGAIN!

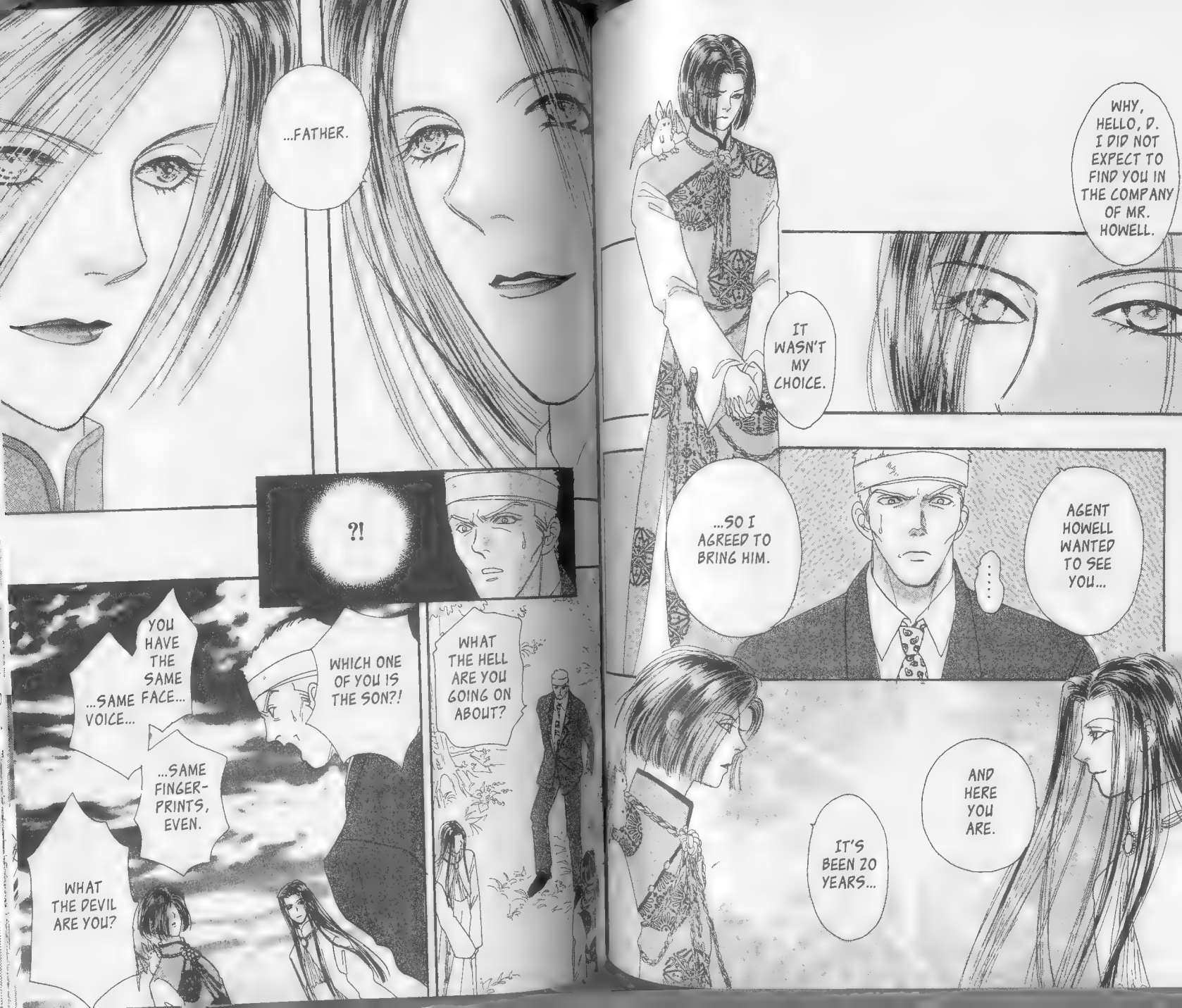
...KILL OR BE KILLED.
...TO BE CHASED ...AND HUNTED?
HOW DOES IT FEEL...
HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE DYING, DETECTIVE?
Huff!
IN EDEN, THERE IS ONLY ONE RULE...
Huff!
I'M RUNNING OUT OF BULLETS.
Huff!

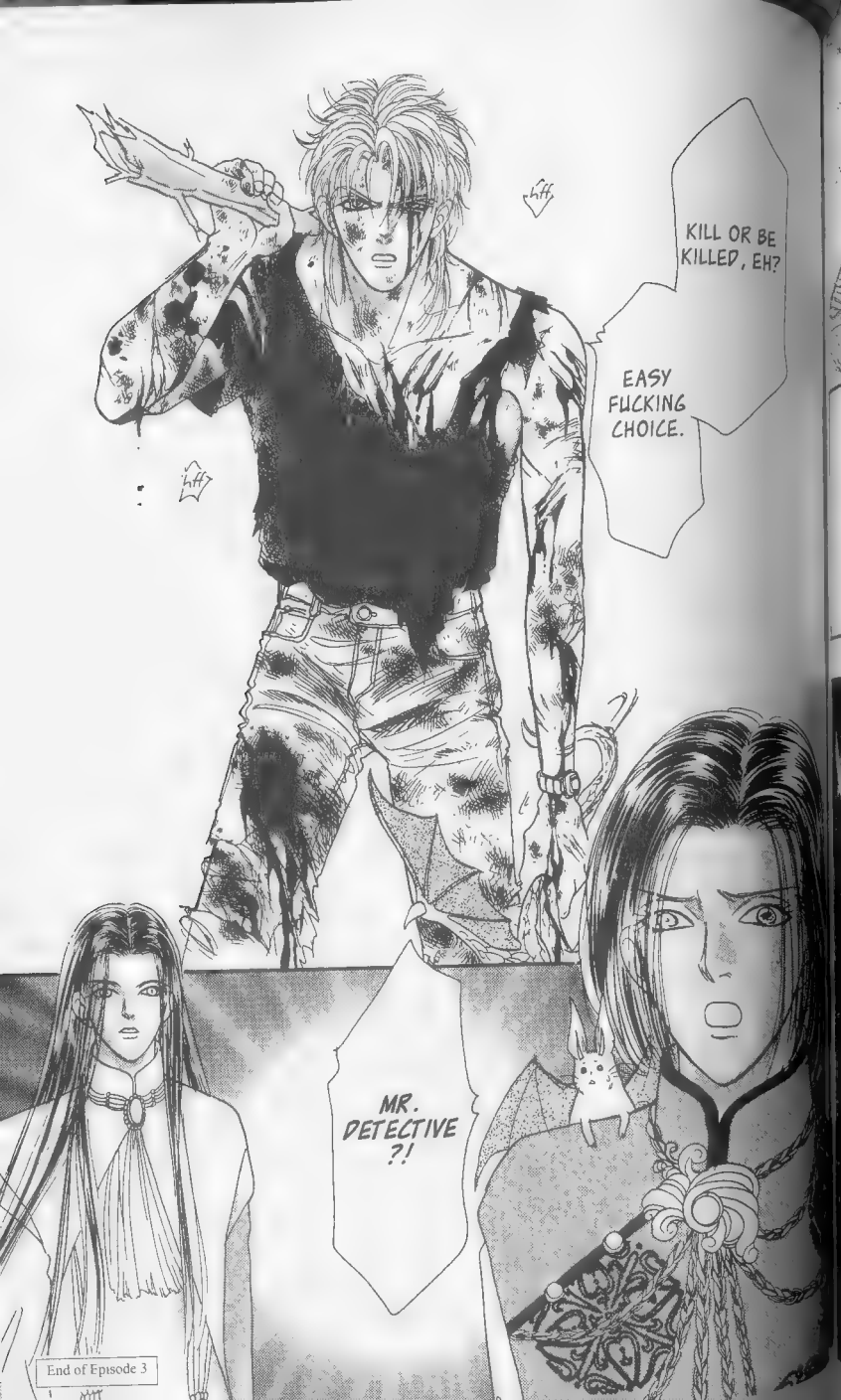

KING
THIS SEEMS TO BE THE PLACE.
IT'S THE ADDRESS LISTED ON ALL OF FATHER'S NEW YEAR'S CARDS.
.....
HELLO, COUNT D.
HOW ARE YOU THIS EVENING?
LOVELY TO SEE YOU, SIR.
LET'S TRY IT OUT.
HMM? THERE ARE NO BUTTONS
HE'S MY GUEST. NO NEED FOR CONCERN.
Understood, Count.
.....
Greetings, Count D. Please be aware that the person with you is carrying a pistol and a mobile phone.
I SEE.
THAT'S A PALM READER. ELEVATOR DESIGNED RECOGN FINGERPR AND VO PATTERN

.....
IS THIS THE RIGHT PLACE?
WHAT'S WRONG?
WHAT THE --?!!
YES... I BELIEVE SO.
I HEAR THE CRIES OF THE KINGDOM...

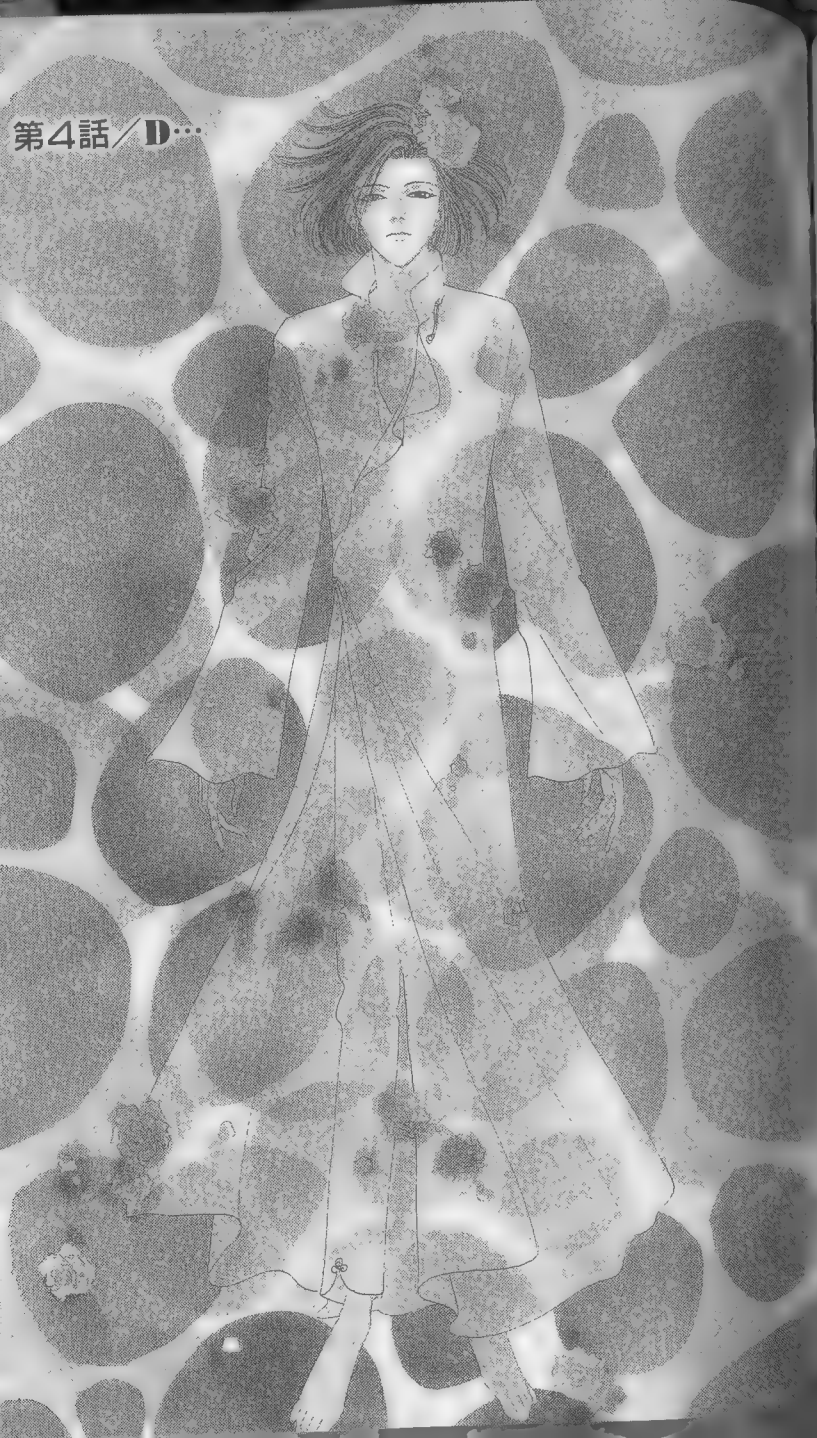
A FEW YEARS LATER, I BEGAN HEARING RUMORS ABOUT A MYSTERIOUS YOUNG CHINESE COUNT KNOWN ONLY BY THE LETTER "D." WHISPERS ABOUT EXOTIC AND BIZARRE PETS THAT HAD BEEN RAISED AND SOLD BY THE COUNT, ONLY TO TURN ON THEIR MASTERS, AND ALWAYS WITH DEVASTATING RESULTS.
I JOINED THE BUREAU SHORTLY AFTER GRADUATION.
THEN ONE DAY, HE DISAPPEARED.
22 YEARS, AND I'VE FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH HIM.
ARREST HIM, OF COURSE.
WHAT DO YOU INTEND...
...TO DO WITH HIM, AGENT HOWELL?
YOU HUMANS, ALWAYS FEARING THAT WHICH YOU...
YES, HUMAN FINGER-PRINTS ARE.
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! HUMAN FINGER-PRINTS ARE UNIQUE!
YOU SAID IT YOURSELF. OUR FINGERPRINTS ARE IDENTICAL.
H-HOW DID YOU...?
...DON'T UNDERSTAND, RIGHT? WE LABEL IT A MONSTER AND TREAT IT AS A THREAT. REJECTING, EXTERMINATING, AND SLAUGHTERING IT INTO OBLIVION.
HOWEVER, HE PUBLISHED HIS RESEARCH UNDER HIS TEACHER'S NAME. HE GOT THE CREDIT, BUT YOUR FATHER GAINED THE ACTUAL KNOWLEDGE.
YOUR FATHER'S RESEARCH LED TO GROUNDBREAKING ADVANCES IN GENETIC ENGINEERING.
THAT WAS HIS FAVORITE SPEECH.

THAT SCENT... IT SMELLS LIKE BLOOD.
WELCOME.
WHAT KIND OF TRICK IS YOUR OLD MAN TRYING TO PULL?
WHAT THE HELL IS ALL THIS?!
THIS... THIS CAN'T BE.
IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
D?! HOLY CRAP, IT'S YOU!
YOU'VE GROWN OLD, VESCA.
HOW DO YOU LIKE THE DECOR?


...FATHER.
?!
WHICH ONE OF YOU IS THE SON?!
YOU HAVE THE SAME FACE...
...SAME VOICE...
...SAME FINGER-PRINTS, EVEN.
WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU GOING ON ABOUT?
WHY, HELLO, D. I DID NOT EXPECT TO FIND YOU IN THE COMPANY OF MR. HOWELL.
IT WASN'T MY CHOICE.
...SO I AGREED TO BRING HIM.
AGENT HOWELL WANTED TO SEE YOU...
.....
IT'S BEEN 20 YEARS...
AND HERE YOU ARE.


KILL OR BE KILLED, EH?
EASY FUCKING CHOICE.
MR. DETECTIVE ?!
End of Episode 3

WAAAARGH!
CAW CAW CAW!



AAH! THAT HURTS...
DAMN.
.....
OWW!
GIVE IT A REST ALREADY!
SO IT REALLY HAPPENED?
I WAS STILL HOPING THIS WAS SOME SORT OF NIGHTMARE.
SO THIS IS WHY YOU KEEP HIM AT YOUR SHOP.
INTUITIVE, AS WELL.
HE'S TOUGHER THAN I THOUGHT.
FATHER!
THE BLEEDING WON'T STOP.
AT THIS RATE...

...THE PAINTERS OF UNSEEN IMAGES.
THE SINGERS OF UNHEARD SONGS.
THE CARETAKERS OF WHAT HAS BEEN LOST.
WE ARE THAT WHICH YOU CHOOSE TO IGNORE.

Father, you're embarrassing me.
Oh, my.. So scary...
YOU KNOW THAT'S A LOAD OF CRAP!
Ow, ow, ow..
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT AT ALL!
OH, GIMME A FREAKIN' BREAK!!
...WITH BUT A BREATH, MAKE DOZENS OF BABY CLONES.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
REPRODUCTION LIKE THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE!
WE ARE DUPLICATES, QUITE SIMILAR TO CLONES.
THE FLESH IS MERELY A VESSEL.
A VEHICLE FOR GENETICS.
OUR BLOOD, OR MORE PRECISELY, OUR GENES...
...ARE PASSED DIRECTLY FROM FATHER TO CHILD, AND DO NOT MIX WITH THE GENES OF ANY OTHER.
BUT THIS CHILD WAS NOT BORN IN A PETRI DISH.
WITH TWO OF US, OUR LIFE'S WORK CAN CONTINUE, EVEN IF TRAGEDY SHOULD BEFALL ME OR MY SON.

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN? ONLY WE CAN OPERATE THE ELEVATOR.
OKAY.
Hey, stand up.
Ooww..
TAKE HIM TO THE HOSPITAL, MR. AGENT.
I MUST SPEAK WITH MY FATHER.
SAME VOICE...
AND HOW CAN TWO MEN HAVE IDENTICAL FINGERPRINTS?
IS THAT SO?
Heh heh...
YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
THE CHINESE HAVE LONG BEEN ABLE TO TAKE HAIR, AND...
Hey!
YOU'RE SOME KIND OF... CLONE!
HUH!
YOU'RE A PRODUCT OF HIS BIOTECH RESEARCH!
WHAT?

KYU...
HUH?
...IS Q-CHAN?
YOU MEAN, MY GRAND-FATHER...
I'M SURPRISED YOU NEVER FIGURED IT OUT.
ENOUGH OF THIS. SHOW US YOUR TRUE FORM.
AN INEVITA-BILITY.
THE RESULT OF THE VARIOUS...
...PEOPLE WE HAVE MET...
...AND THE DIFFERENT ERAS WE GREW UP IN.
I'd stand up if I could.
BUT YOU'RE NOT EXACT DUPLICATES, ARE YOU?
YOUR PERSONALITIES ARE DIFFERENT.
And I'm not talkin' about the hair.
AND IT APPEARS THAT THE WEIGHT OF CARRYING SUCH A HEAVY BURDEN HAS AFFECTED US IN DIFFERENT WAYS, AS WELL.
REVENGE IS SUCH A STRESSFUL BUSINESS.
I AM SORRY, MY SON.
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, FATHER.

I've really gotta find a new line of work...
POPS...
...I'M NO IVY-LEAGUER....
...BUT I THINK WE'VE GOTTA LOOK THE FACTS STRAIGHT IN THE EYE HERE.
I'M THROUGH WITH BEING IGNORED.
WILL SOMEONE PLEASE TELL ME...
...WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!
FIRST CLONES...
...NOW GHOSTS
I'VE HEARD NOTHING BUT GHOST STORIES AND FAIRY TALES FROM THESE FREAKS!
WHAT FACTS?!
FACTS?
WHERE?
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?
WE'RE FROM CHINA.
WHERE THE HELL DID YOU COME FROM?!
AND ALL BECAUSE I'D NOT TRUST YOU ENOUGH TO RAISE MY GRANDSON.
ANGER I CAN UNDERSTAND, MY SON, BUT HATE?
EXISTING IN A BODY THAT SMALL DOES REQUIRE A BIT OF SACRIFICE.
...I wanted to keep an eye on you.
ALL THIS TIME...
...YOU'VE BEEN RIGHT BESIDE ME THE WHOLE--
HE'S NO GHOST...
WHO IS THIS GUY? SOME SORT OF GHOST?!
DON'T I KNOW IT.
YOUR FRIEND HAS QUITE THE TEMPER.
Agitated again...
HE'S THE SON OF A BITCH RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THIS!
OR WHAT ABOUT THE YOUNG GIRL WHO DIED IN THE PLANE CRASH?! WAS THAT YOUR IDEA OF REVENGE TOO?! WHAT DID THEY EVER DO TO YOU?!
REVENGE, EH? REVENGE AGAINST THE POOR OLD JEWISH LADY YOU SOLD THE TEDDY BEAR TO?!

OUR ANCESTORS LIVED IN A REMOTE AREA...
...OF ANCIENT CHINA THAT IS NOW KNOWN AS THE KUNLUN MOUNTAINS.
WE WERE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE SPEECH OF ANIMALS...
...AND BEGAN TO KNOW THEM AS FRIENDS.
WE WOULD CONVEY TO THE LOCAL VILLAGERS THE PROPHECIES TOLD TO US BY THE SACRED BEASTS.
AND SOON THE EMPEROR INVITED US TO HIS PALACE AS HIS ROYAL FORTUNE-TELLERS.
WE WERE CALLED PRIESTS AND PRIESTESSES, HERMITS AND SORCERERS.
Offerings
WE INSPIRED AWE, RESPECT, ENVY AND JEALOUSY.
AND WE SOON LEARNED THAT LOVE AND HATRED WALK HAND IN HAND.
THEN ONE DAY, THE EMPEROR'S SON, A STRONG WARRIOR OF GREAT RENOWN, ASKED A PRIESTESS OF OUR RACE FOR HER HAND IN MARRIAGE.
SHE POLITELY REFUSED THE OFFER...
...AND THE YOUNG WARRIOR WAS HEART-BROKEN.
Yeah, polite. Sure.
WHY DID SHE REJECT...
WHY?
...MY LOVE AND DEVOTION?
SHE ISN'T HUMAN. THEY'RE NOT HUMAN. THEY'RE DEVILS! MONSTERS!!
KILL THEM!
LET NOT A SINGLE ONE LIVE!!!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN, I WONDER?
HMM?
I REMEMBER. YOU'VE TOLD IT TO ME MANY TIMES, GRANDFATHER.
.....

OUR SUFFERING OUR ANGER
OUR SORROW
I BEQUEATH IT ALL TO THE AFTERLIFE
OUR DESTRUCTION MUST BE AVENGED! THE HUMANS SHALL FEEL OUR WRATH!
...HE LAY DOWN UPON THE EARTH, AND READIED HIS SOUL FOR DEATH.
EXHAUSTED AND BEATEN
ONLY A SINGLE MAN, OUR DISTANT ANCESTOR, SURVIVED THE GENOCIDE.
SUCH ANGER
THEY KILLED MY PARENTS.
WHY...
SUCH HATRED!
WHAT DID WE DO TO THEM?!
I BURIED MY CHILDREN
WHERE DID IT ALL COME FROM?!

?!
Y-YOU DON'T MEAN...
...YOU'VE COMPLETED THE RESEARCH?!
OUR VENGEANCE HAS ALREADY BEGUN.
THE SEED HAS BEEN PLANTED.
IT ISN'T A QUESTION OF RACE OR TIME.
...MANKIND REMAINS FUNDAMENTALLY THE SAME.
WHITE OR BLACK, RICH OR POOR... REGARDLESS OF THE ERA...
REVENGE...
...AGAINST PEOPLE WHO HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR ANCESTORS.
ALL THIS, JUST SO YOU CAN CONTINUE TO HARBOR A THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD GRUDGE!
THE HUMAN RACE HAS NO RIGHT TO BE AT THE TOP OF THIS PLANET'S FOOD CHAIN.
VIOLENT, SELFISH, DESPOTIC...
IT WAS AN AIRBORNE PLAGUE THAT TARGETED HUMANS. A SPECIES-SPECIFIC BIOLOGICAL WEAPON!
RE-SEARCH?
WHEN I MET COUNT D, HE WAS WORKING ON ENGINEERING A NEW VIRUS. HE CLAIMED IT WAS FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.
THERE ARE ONLY TWO OF YOU. I DON'T CARE WHO YOU ARE, YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE.
HOW THE HELL ARE YOU GONNA DO IT?
GOD ALMIGHTY...
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT KILLING ALL OF MANKIND! WHO'S THE DESPOT NOW?

YOU'RE NUTS, D!
HOWELL ?
YOU THINK I'M JUST GOING TO STAND AROUND AND LET YOU DESTROY THE WORLD?!
DO NOT BE CONCERNED. AFTER ALL, YOU WILL NOT BE DYING ALONE.
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!
ONCE THE VIRUS HAS BEEN RELEASED, THERE WILL BE VERY LITTLE TIME. IT SPREADS QUITE QUICKLY.
WHAT SCIENTISTS ONCE SCORNED AS SCIENCE FICTION NOW HOLDS THE POWER TO DESTROY THEIR REALITY.
FATHER, WAIT!
YOU MIGHT WANT TO GO VISIT YOUR BROTHER.
.....
WHAT'S WRONG? THE WORLD'S FATE IS IN MY HANDS.
WHY DON'T YOU PULL THE TRIGGER?
YOU'RE JUST AS DELUDED AS YOU WERE IN SCHOOL!
THIS IS SOMETHING I SHOULD'VE DONE 20 YEARS AGO!
I AM SIMPLY HELPING THEM ALONG.
DO NOT WORRY, MY SON. HUMANITY IS ALREADY ON A PATH TO SELF-DESTRUCTION.

FATHER !!
FATHER, NO!!
SHIT!
FATHER ?!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
YOU MONSTER!!
NOT MUCH OF A SHOT, ARE YOU, VESCA? YOU CAN DO BETTER.
AFTER ALL, IF THERE'S ONE THING A HUMAN CAN DO, IT'S KILL.

?!
THE SWITCH TO NUKE THE GODDAMN FLOOR?!
THE HELL WAS THAT?!
I HAD...
...ONE SHOT LEFT.
!!
NO!!

FATHER !
FATHER ...?
REMEMBER WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN...
...FOR IT IS THE LAST MEMORY I BEQUEATH TO YOU.
BLOOD ENVELOPED BY FLAME.
OUR KIND SLAIN BY HUMANS.
STRAY NO FURTHER.
DO NOT EMBRACE HOPE AGAIN.
WE...MUST N-NEVER FORGIVE...THE HUMANS.

TURN ON THE SPRINKLERS!
I CAN'T, SIR. THE CIRCUITS TO THE UPPER BLOCK HAVE BEEN CUT.
WE HAVE AN EMERGENCY ON THE GARDEN LEVEL!
IT'S ON FIRE!
EVACUATE THE LOWER FLOORS, NOW!
OH MY GOD!!
HUH?
MOMMY, WHAT'S THAT?
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
YOU DON'T SEE THEM?
AH!
POPS! GET DOWN!
AGENT HOWELL !!

I WILL TAKE AND RAISE THIS CHILD.
DEAT- AND REBIRT-
THAT IS THE LIFE CYCLE OF OUR SPECIES.
AND SOMEDAY...
...HE WILL BEQUEATH HIS LAST MEMORY...TO THE CHILD HE FATHERS.
MY SON...
...YOU HAVE GIVEN BIRTH...
...TO A HUMAN CHILD.
GRAND-FATHER ?
...IT WAS YOUR WISH TO BE REBORN AS ONE OF THEM.
NO MATTER HOW MANY YOU BETRAYED AND KILLED...

OH GOD...
AAAH!
KAFF!
I'M SURPRISED TO SEE YOU GOING DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT.
THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU, MR. DETECTIVE.
YES, YOU ARE. AND THE SCORE BETWEEN US ISN'T SETTLED.
IF THE WORLD'S FORESTS SHOULD BECOME DESERTS...
... AND ITS OCEANS FREEZE ...
B-BUT... YOU...
huff
Y-YOU SHOULD HATE ME... NOT ONLY DID I SHOOT YOUR FATHER...
...B-BUT I'M HUMAN.
huff

KAFF!
HUFF!
KAFF!
CLAK
CLAK
EITHER FROM BLOOD LOSS OR THE FIRE...
...I'M FINISHED SOON EITHER WAY.
KAFF!
FINISH ME OFF QUICKLY.

UH?!
HUH?
D, LET'S GET ONE THING STRAIGHT ...
...I HAVE NO INTEREST IN DYING WITH YOU!
...SOMEDAY HUMANS WILL FLY AS WELL.
YEAH ...
SOMEDAY... MAYBE WE WILL.
huff
huff
huff
ENOUGH.
FORGET ABOUT ME.
huff
ALL CHINESE PEOPLE CAN FLY, RIGHT?
THAT WEIRD MARTIAL ARTS TRICK OF YOURS.
PERHAPS ...
...MY VENGEANCE WILL NOT BE COMPLETE ...
...UNTIL EVERY HUMAN IS DEAD.

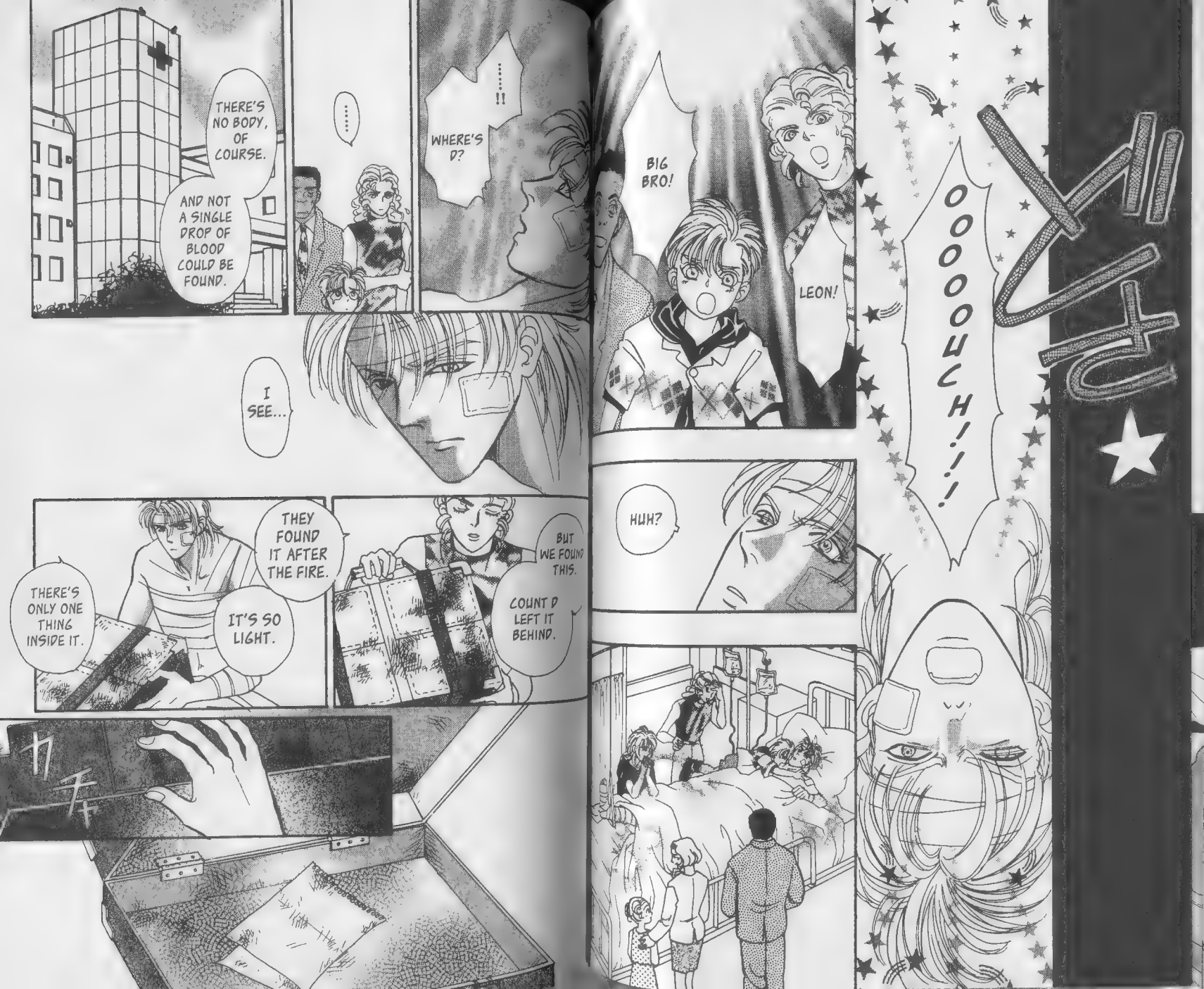
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS.
I'M...
...REALLY FLYING!
AAAAAAAAAA

THAT LYING SACK OF SHIT!
I'M FUCKING DEAD!
WHICH CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING.
.....
YOU KNOW...
...THIS FEELS KINDA NICE.
A GUY COULD REALLY GET USED TO THIS.
WELL, WHATEVER

HUH?
GRAB
LEON!
PON-CHAN?
COUNT, YOU LITTLE...!
HOLY CRAP! YOU'RE TETSU!
UH?

WELL, COUNT, WHERE WE GOING?
ANY-WHERE.
WE ARE ABLE TO MOVE FREELY...
...WITHOUT REGARD FOR THE BORDERS HUMANS HAVE DRAWN.
WAIT A MINUTE...
THIS IS THE PET SHOP!
THE ENTIRE THING'S A SHIP!

BUT YOUR JOURNEY ENDS HERE.
WHAT?
HUMANS HAVE NOT EARNED THE RIGHT TO BOARD THIS SHIP. NOT YET.
ASH


THERE'S NO BODY, OF COURSE.
AND NOT A SINGLE DROP OF BLOOD COULD BE FOUND.
.....
.....!!
WHERE'S D?
I SEE...
THEY FOUND IT AFTER THE FIRE.
IT'S SO LIGHT.
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING INSIDE IT.
BUT WE FOUND THIS.
COUNT D LEFT IT BEHIND.
カチ
BIG BRO!
LEON!
HUH?
OOOOOUCH!!!
XII

BUT LAB RESULTS CAN ONLY TELL US SO MUCH, AND THEY SURE CAN'T EXPLAIN WHAT I SAW THAT EVENING.
...AND WAS FOUND TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN A GLOB OF PLANKTON.
THE COUNT'S BIO-WEAPON WAS CONFISCATED AND EXAMINED...
MAYBE, DESPITE ALL OF OUR ADVANCES, THE HUMAN RACE IS ON A PATH TO ITS OWN DESTRUCTION.
HELL, HE MAY BE RIGHT.
MAYBE WE ARE ALL...
MAYBE WE ARE JUST MOTHS BEING DRAWN TO A FLAME
WHAT WAS IT AGAIN? AH, THAT'S RIGHT.
THAT SILLY SON OF A BITCH.

MAYBE THAT'S NOT SUCH A BAD THING. MAYBE HUMANITY NEEDS A GOOD KICK IN THE ASS.
YEAH, MAYBE.
I'M SURE THAT, AS WE SPEAK, HE'S SETTING UP A NEW SHOP IN SOME OTHER CHINATOWN...
...READY TO SELL HIS DEMONIC PETS TO A WHOLE NEW SET OF UNSUSPECTING CUSTOMERS.
WHEN THE VERY LAST HUMAN BREATHES HIS VERY LAST BREATH...
...I'M SURE D WILL BE THERE, WATCHING... AND SMILING.

FATHER ISN'T HERE RIGHT NOW.
THEY'RE NOT.
THEY'RE ABOUT YOUR FATHER, ACTUALLY.
IF THEY'RE ABOUT THAT POOR MAN'S ACCIDENT, THEN THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO DISCUSS.
THIS IS THE FBI! OPEN UP! I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU!
.....
WELL, THAT'S A SHAME.
I BROUGHT HIM SOME CHERRY TARTS.
WELL, WE CAN'T HAVE THOSE GO TO WASTE. WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TEA?

YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME. ANOTHER ONE?!
YES, THE VICTIM'S A YOUNG MALE, 22 YEARS OF AGE. AND LIKE THE OTHERS HE HAD RECENTLY PAID A VISIT TO A PET SHOP IN CHINATOWN.
THIS ONE'S MINE!
HUH?
HEY, ORCOT! WAIT!
COUNT

PET CATALOG
ペットカタログ

No. 10

Passenger Pigeon

Once, there were over Five billion of these pigeons roaming the skies of Central and North America. Heavily hunted by European immigrants, only 250,000 remained in 1896. Government efforts at conservation came too late, and by 1900, passenger pigeons ceased to exist in the wild. The species went extinct in 1914 when Martha, the last of her kind, died in captivity.

Nebraska Wolf

The most famous wolf I can think of is White Fang, the wolf-dog from Jack London's book of the same name. Lived alongside Native Americans, only to be hunted and slaughtered by European immigrants. Extinct around 1926.

American Bison (Buffalo)

Also heavily hunted, but escaped extinction thanks to conservation efforts. About 60,000 exist today.

I WAS WONDERING ...
...20 YEARS AGO, MY OLDER BROTHER, LEON, LEFT TO RETURN SOMETHING TO COUNT D. SOMETHING THAT THE COUNT HAD LEFT BEHIND.
DO YOU KNOW IF HE EVER MADE IT?
上海飯店
RED DRAGO
COCKT
D.C CAFE
SALAD
End of Episode 4

Count D's Cosplay Lesson
THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU'LL BE SEEING ME. GOTTA GO OUT LOOKING GOOD.
HMM... WHAT TO WEAR, WHAT TO WEAR...
YEAH, CUSTOM-MADE FOR A WOMAN. YOU SHOULD PICK UP A GQ MAGAZINE ONCE IN AWHILE.
MEN THESE DAYS SHOULD LOOK CASUAL, YET CONFIDENT.
I CAN'T TELL A SINGLE OUTFIT OF YOURS APART.
HOW RUDE! THEY'RE ALL CUSTOM-MADE, YOU KNOW!
UH...
fitting room
WHAT?
WHAT GOES ON TOP?
WHAT'S TAKING YOU SO LONG?

Chimera

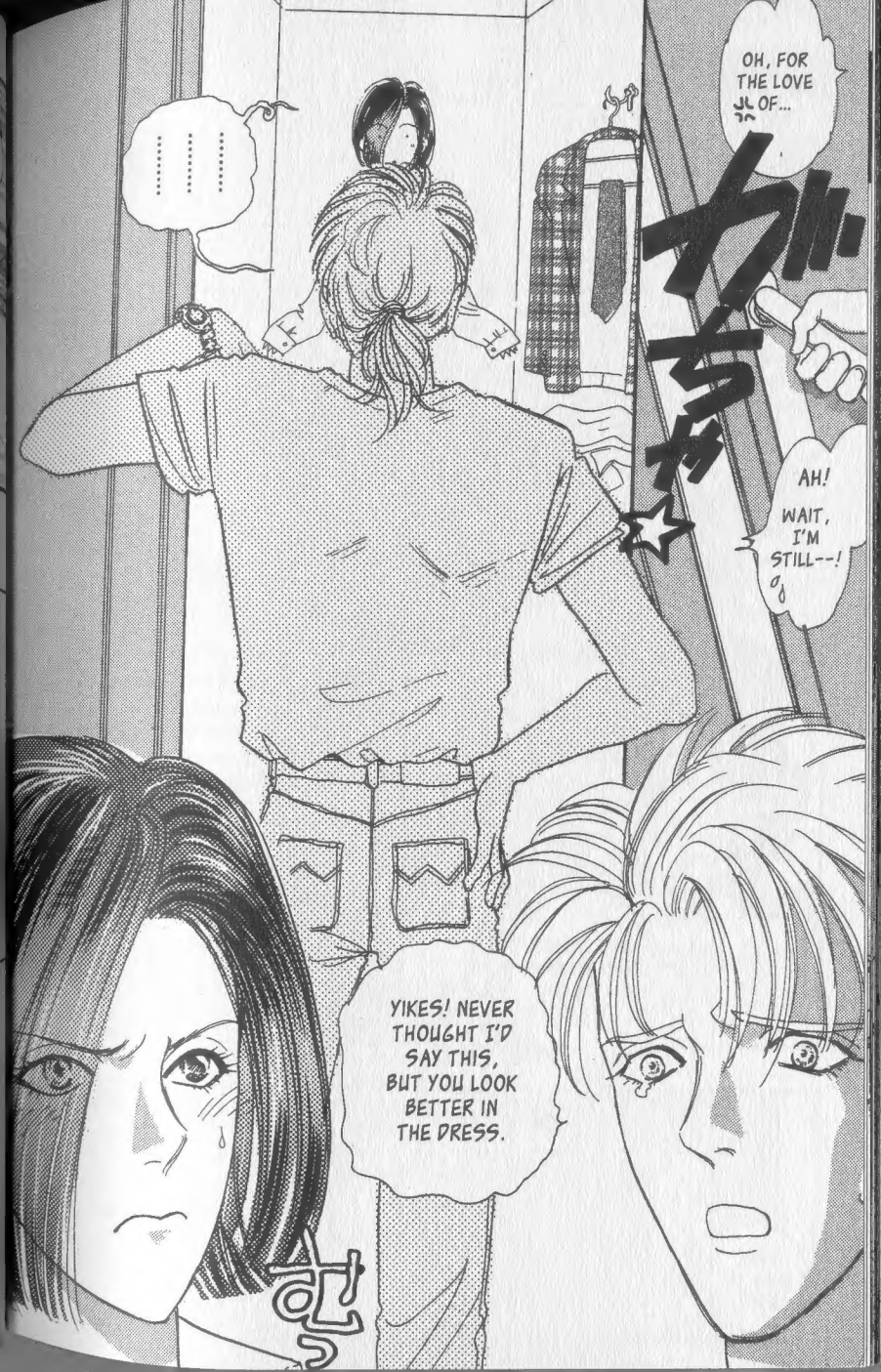
In Greek myth, the chimera had the head of a lion, the torso of a mountain goat and the tail of a serpent, but many variations of these mythical beasts exist.

By the way, this is a griffin, with the front of an eagle and the rear legs and tail of a lion.

Would it kill ya to wear a pair of jeans every once in a while?
Jeans?! Why I never!
Count, there's something I've been wanting to ask you since the day I first met you...

I can't believe how quickly we got to 10 volumes! While the time I've spent working on this series has flown by, it's been quite a while since we first met Count D. To say goodbye, I wanted to dress him up in odd clothing one last time.

Thanks to everyone who sent letters, gifts and cosplay pictures! Special thanks to everyone who helped me out and to all the *Pet Shop of Horrors* fans!



So what is Count D? Friend to mankind—or enemy?
Benevolent force—or unspeakable evil?

If you've been following Matsuri Akino's *Pet Shop of Horrors* from the start, you may be tempted to say that he's a bit of all four. Surely the angry and hateful Count D who appears in this final volume is quite a departure from the friendly and occasionally comical Count often found sparring playfully with Detective Leon Orcot in previous volumes. Or the downright matronly count who took young Chris Orcot under his wing. Or even the eerily omniscient D of early volumes who provided "love and dreams" to his desperate customers, fully aware that human nature would twist his gifts into something decidedly sinister. This early version of D was hardly a hero, but he was a far cry from the malevolent Count D who emerges for the manga's climax.

Only the manga-ka knows for sure, but I would suggest that to understand D's evolution, one needs to look closely at the kind stories Akino-sensei intended to tell with *Pet Shop of Horrors*. The tales that fill these ten volumes are nearly all morality plays. Each one of them can be taken as a warning against some kind of behavior. When taken in that context, Count D becomes the series' voice of reason. (As opposed to Leon, who provides its emotion.) He's Akino-sensei's Rod Serling. And after ten volumes of being ignored by mankind, of watching the human race continue to act with no regard for the rest of the planet, of watching people harm each other time and time again, is it any wonder that he's a little pissed off?

So what is Count D? He is, quite simply, one of the most intriguing and richly developed characters to come out of the graphic novel medium. Beyond that, we can only speculate. But for now, one thing is certain…the pet shop is closed.

–Tim Beedle, English Adaptation Writer

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Pet Shop of Horrors™

In this, the final volume of *Pet Shop of Horrors*, the sinister saga of Count D and Leon Orcot comes to its chilling conclusion.

DEPARTURE: When two young ladies pay a visit to Count D's shop, they're not looking to take home a pet, but their little brother—Chris Orcot!

DISAPPEARANCE: Count D has disappeared, and the hunt to find him is on, especially since a new serial killer has emerged, one whose modus operandi appears to involve frenzied wild animals.

DUPLICATION: When Detective Orcot meets Count D's father, it becomes clear that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

D: In the climactic final chapter of *Pet Shop of Horrors*, the truth about Count D and his family is revealed...and we say good-bye to a few old friends.

"*Pet Shop of Horrors* is a successful fusion of *Twilight Zone* anthology horror [with] shojo manga conventions."
-Scott Green, Ain't It Cool News

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Pet Shop of Horrors
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